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LAZARD ON PCF STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC GOALS

Paris CAHIERS DU COMMUNISME in French Jun 83 pp 24-37

[Lecture by Politburo member Francette Lazard, given at the PCF's national Party teach-in at Argenteuil, 12-15 May 83: Titled "An Action Strategy"]

[Text] The headline over the April 1983 Central Committee report, "Everywhere, Reach Out to the People," was right on the mark, because it sums up in six words both the need and the opportunity for putting more confidence, more assurance, more openness -- in short, more direct immediacy into our political approach.

If we compare that motto with those on the banners at the last three Party congresses ("French-Style Communism" at the 22nd, "The Future Starts Now" at the 23rd, and "Build!" at the 24th, we can descry the shift in a strategy that is in the throes of the process of definition and enrichment and, at the same time, edging closer to brass-tacks practicality. What I am going to say to you here will deal with that very idea.

The new givens in the situation, as analyzed at the CC meeting in April 1983, enable us to get a better grasp -- better, because more down-to-earth -- of the realist, innovative thrust of the French-style socialism we propose. On the other hand, our clearer understanding of the realism in our political outlook lets us move with more assurance toward its practical realization in proposals and initiatives in the struggle, in dialogue, and in debate.

The strategy elaborated by the recent PC congresses could never be explained, much less defined, in the abstract, isolated from the social and political realities from which it grows. It rules out that dichotomy, because "the French-style socialism we seek stems from the most basic givens in the realities of France today."

By breaking once and for all with all notions of stages whose timing and formulation were handed down from above, as well as with any concept of socialism as something derived from a model irrelevant

to real history, the 24th congress has established a rapport, at the very heart of our life as a nation, between our choice of a French kind of socialism and our choice of the way that opens up its future.

Coming to Grips with the Realities of Our Time, Our Country

The idea of a French kind of socialism conceived as the practical and fundamental response to the great problems facing our country has long been familiar to us. Even so, I should like to concentrate on its newness at the same time as on its innovative and renewing nature. It is actually quite new to us and it is the storm-center of a ceaseless and violent clash of ideas. So it is not something to be taken for granted.

Our adversaries are putting forth intensive efforts to link the idea of our "irresistible decline" with that of the "sclerotic archaism" of what they say is our doctrine. Clichés, once they come of age, have hard lives. What they actually do, on the contrary, is to confirm the degree to which our creative renewal, directly focused on an understanding of the changes of our time, innovative in analysis and in response, is indeed something that reaches far into the future of the revolutionary battles to be fought in France as the current crisis alters it. Georges Marchais underscored that point in his closing address to the 24th congress:

"Under complex, intractable, and changing circumstances, at the price of a collective effort at lucid thinking, at reflection, at questioning long-established views, we have arrived at a more rigorous, more real understanding of the society we live in, the world in which that society evolves, and the perspectives and insights we can achieve." [CAHIERS DU COMMUNISME, Feb-Mar 82, p 417]

The true home of the dogmas and anachronisms is in fact with those who, from the employers' side, from the Right -- but not only from the Right -- imprison their ideas, their thoughts, their intentions and their actions within limits they will not let themselves cross, the metes and bounds of old standards of a dying capitalism sinking into the swamp of the crisis.

As we look at our most recent congresses, and find in them every bit of the critical and revolutionary spirit proper to a vitally alive Marxism, we prepare to study, analyze, understand the world and our country in these changing times we share with all mankind.

The buildup of knowledge, the scientific and technical revolution, the decisive advances in the area of computers and automation, are toppling the ancient social structures, and leaving an indelible mark on the individual soul. The 24th congress cited it in these words: "The universal thirst for emancipation, the level achieved by the working people, and all this new knowledge cry out for a new civilization."

To know, to understand, to master, to anticipate the possible future assumes, as we are keenly aware, a new stirring of life for Marxism, the equal and peer of these major developments.

Reality -- No Holds Barred

Although we are modest in our assessment of our own requirements, we have the very strong feeling that we have truly, even now, added something new to the understanding of the major issues of our time, to the analysis of the present crisis, to the thinking about socialism as it is being built, in its history, its global diversity, as well as in its outlook for France. We have brought something new to it, because we cared enough to look at reality and to see it whole, as it is, without complacency, "cheating neither reality nor consciences." [Lecture by Georges Marchais: "The French Challenge to the Crisis.]"

I dwell on this, because this approach, by virtue of its being at direct grips with reality, stirs us to far greater daring in the way we formulate the responses we can now offer to the problems as the people cope with them. I would even say that one of our great contributions to the movement of thought in French today is our willingness to look at reality squarely, without bias, without clichés, without intellectual self-sensorship.

The doctrinaires, the dogmatists are the ones who are still prisoners of the dominant ideas of capital. Some, these days, cite the class struggle as if it were a doctrinaire postulate one might choose, according to one's political options, to make a part of reality or to drop into oblivion. Yet the truth is that it is precisely these same shifts and movements on the part of society, in the contradictions that are expressed within it at any given moment, which prove the concrete existence of class confrontations and which become clear in the light of understanding. That is of course a commonplace observation. But let's not underestimate either the power of the dominant ideas or that of the obstacles that stand in the way of advancement of our influence, the power of the hoary clichés that hold communists up as preachers of a doctrine from another time and another place. And let's not underestimate the impact on ourselves of the newness of an approach that led us at our 23d congress to go beyond a concept of "Marxist-Leninist" theory, perceived as a base of principles that would be the base for models from which, according to setting and circumstance, the political decisions of the moment would be deduced.

Let's be all the more attentive to the importance of the innovative content of an entire approach aimed at the real contradictions inherent in its mutations and in its practical movements. And let us even now begin to assess the advantages we derive, as of right now, from that approach.

Reality in Its Diversity

The manner in which the essential texts elaborated by the Communist Party over the recent period are structured and argued is remarkable in this connection, and, in my view, not sufficiently recognized as such. One notes in them a scrupulous concern with grasping, in a sensitive and practical way, the specificity of the realities with which they deal.

I shall cite two passages among many others to illustrate my point. They have to do with crucial issues in the debate over ideas: the crisis, and socialism.

On the crisis: "Rejecting the vague notion of "world crisis" is not to deny the purely international dimensions of the crisis; it is to seek to analyze it in all its dimensions and all its complexity. Without disguising the very great disparity among the situations current in the world, on the basis of the finding that while all countries are experiencing difficulties, those difficulties are alike neither in scope nor in kind."

And on socialism: "We are bending every effort, ourselves, at assessing the movement and the contradictions in the socialist countries as they are, with neither blinkers nor prejudices. We intend to follow this approach and to do more to keep the workers informed of its findings. This striving for objectivity drives those who embrace it to reject the caricature that depicts the socialist countries as a uniform bloc of societies frozen into totalitarianism."

In the whirlwind of disinformation designed to paralyze the critical mind in a cascade of unproved assertions, to lull the very faculty of reason, this new approach is for us pregnant with extremely fertile possibilities in the area of confrontation, debate, and dialogue, because it harks back to serious and direct examination of tangible realities in the very experience people draw from reality, to the thoughts and ideas that spring from their aspirations. This is expressed in the quotation from Marx cited in the resolution of the 24th congress: "Communism is for us neither a state which must be created, nor an ideal by which reality must be governed. What we call communism is the real movement that abolishes the present state..."

By extracting the grand perspective of socialism that we propose from an examination of realities as they are, we are proposing a new concept of rigorous and open policy, free and frank because it is in direct contact with reality.

As we are well aware, this concept is still a long way from permeating all our analyses, all that we do.

In this connection, you will note the thrust of the latest Central Committee meeting's adjurations regarding communists' work in private enterprise: "Above and beyond mere quantitative development, we must assess the repercussions of these changes in the day-to-day operations of businesses, in labor relations, in behavior patterns and attitudes. And we must take another look at these transformations, not merely for documentary purposes, but in order to draw on them for guidance in all aspects of our activities."

I hope I have made you all see where this is leading. The practical reality of the Socialist outlook for France which we propose is not merely inserted pro forma, or as a liturgical tag. It is the result of a beginning nurtured on analyses and experience, and set squarely in contact with verifiable, tangible realities.

Ours is an approach, thus, which faces up to what all workers, in their vast majority, encounter in the course of their days, whether or not they are aware of it; it is hence an approach that can respond to their aspirations, to answer questions that arise out of their everyday lives.

The political outlook we propose is not a blue-print for the future, untrammelled by the constraints of the present, an additional dash of soul or idealism allowing us to go on dreaming of the New City as we dutifully swallow the prescribed purgative draught. It derives the innovative daring of its proposals from the deep roots it has sent down into the contradictions of things as they are, while rejecting, a priori, the dogmas and the false certitudes of the old models.

When the Question Contains the Answer

This is why analysis of the crisis totally excludes the dominant postulate of a "global crisis" and forgoes any attempt to paste a label on a world in the throes of change, whether that "foreordained" label was written by Marx or Engels.

Strong in the great discoveries of Marxism, our analysis develops its innovative and revolutionary scope as it reveals why, in our time of technological revolution, the key to an effective society is to be found in resolute struggle against the cancerous proliferation of waste -- waste of resources and waste of human beings. It also reveals the long-obsolete nature of the old standards of profit and return on investment which are the basic tenets of capitalist management. It allows us, beyond the dry bones of numbers, to measure the social, human, and planetary cost of such waste: it comes to hundreds of billions of dollars squandered in sterile speculation, and in hundreds of millions of people starving and illiterate.

Scrutiny of these international realities enables us to measure the scope of the problems and discern the true nature of the stakes in our era. "We are experiencing the crisis of a type of growth in technology and in social life, itself the offspring of the crisis in capitalism and its system of world domination."

I refer you to "The French Challenge to the Crisis," to analyses of our time, in which the imperative need for revolutionary transformations in technology and in the economy, in the decision-making power, and in management practices is gradually attaining universal scope.

Looking at stakes like these, in a world watching the rising tide of power and diversity among the forces of national liberation and human freedom, of peace and progress, imperialism is fighting for its life, and class struggles grow ever sharper.

From examination of the realities of the crisis, of its international dimensions, emerges France's possible and practical challenge to it: it is in fact at the very heart of the old capitalist system, and hence at its national roots, where lies the key to success for efforts committed to breaking out of it.

The major innovative idea in our approach is that the answers French-style socialism offers are contained in the questions posed by the crisis, and that they are nothing more or less than the liberation of the manifold potential that is held down today by the thumbscrews of the old standards of capitalist management. They are summoned up by the aspirations that are rising in the entire body of society even as the crisis deepens.

The 24th congress sums up these questions, these aspirations, these responses, in four basic ideas, or if you will, four problems stated in practical terms and calling for practical solutions: social justice, new growth, democracy and freedom, human rights, a new cultural renaissance, and a new kind of human relations.

There you have a completely original, deeply innovative approach from Socialism in response to the issues as they arise in our crisis-ridden French society. Flying French colors from A to Z, it begins with practical needs as sources of various kinds; it lays bare the bottlenecks, the contradictions, the obstacles capital and its outworn management standards erect; it pinpoints the possible outcome as it emerges of itself from reality.

This conception rules out the model, and there can be no thought of making a model of it, because it flows from the realities as they are at a specific moment in a specific country. It frees the potential of that society, and it is as a function of those possibilities, of these givens, ripened in the whole of the nation's material and cultural heritage that we have been thinking about the future of the forms of property, of power, of social and human relationships that will confer on this socialism "flying French colors" its democratic and self-managing character.

We have not yet talked about this enough among ourselves and with our friends.

How many people are there still, including our own electorate and even those in our own ranks, who believe that we want to abolish private ownership, collectivize social life, leave all decision-making to the State? How many people are still imbued with the old concept of a socialism whose principles, rules, and standards would be determined from on high, and thrust upon society by state decision?

To Delay Action Is to Leave the Field Undefended

The corollary to this notion is that, if that decision by the state is not on the agenda of political realities, socialism itself must be postponed to some undefined "later" date.

How, some will ask, could we tell people that socialism is on the agenda when we have only 15 percent? Well, postponing it means leaving an open, undefended field on decisive issues to the class adversary. This is why, even as we attribute full value to the decisive contribution of decades of communist battles in the contemporary history of France, in the rise of the ideas of social progress, of the rights and dignity of the working class, of international solidarity, of the independence of peoples, of unity, and of socialism, we have lucidly analyzed the consequences of a strategic delay lasting more than 20 years on the influence of revolutionary ideas in France.

There were wholly new issues and problems ripening in a nation in the throes of change. The necessities of transforming social relations, relations between the working class and the state, of the assertion of its leading role in society, profoundly stirring the whole of society. Hence what we were concerned with was issues that could be resolved only in the already defined context of socialism. And since the question of socialism had been relegated to some point beyond the preliminary phase of the Common Platform, any premature consideration of these imperatives was, at best, only a reformist illusion.

As you will remember, it took until the end of the Sixties for us to stop seeing reformism in the call for a democratic plan. The end of the Seventies saw the beginning of interest in the content of vocational training. And we are barely beginning to scratch the surface of the practical aspects of class intervention in the crucial areas of corporate management and production criteria. The crushing domination of employer ideas about this in the upcoming strata of workers, cadres, and engineers, is an index to the problems we shall have to deal with in order to raise the class battle to the level of current demands. On the other side of the coin, the way the employers react whenever their absolutism is challenged on these decisive grounds is tangible proof of the new possibilities opened to us by the announcement of a new approach, to wit: stop dodging the major issues that arise at the very heart of the crisis, and stir people to take a practical hand in the direction of the solution proffered by a French kind of socialism. And doing it by

laying bare, on the spot, the roots of what is halting the advance in the capitalist management of society.

I shall sum up my point in this first portion, which bears on the practical realism of our view of socialism à la française:

1. It sets the response of French-style socialism at the heart of the issues which fuel the aggravation of the crisis.
2. It opens up a prospect that responds directly to aspirations fed by the demands of reality, even though true awareness of the solutions they assume is largely lacking.
3. It gives us, in the quick of the clash of ideas, some high trumps that are extremely potent because they are solidly argued, to prove that a national way out is possible and that the only true and sane realism is audacity in daring to offer the innovative proposal.

In other words, and this is the first key datum in our new strategy, nothing could be put off till tomorrow once the issue of true French socialism is concretely raised by the crisis. The second essential datum is that nothing could be settled from on high.

The People Must Set the Pace

Let me go back for a moment to the starting point of this second part, the idea mentioned earlier in passing: the prospect of pure French socialism is not a pie-in-the-sky daydream designed to soften the harsh edges of our times.

Delving into the reality of our time to extract a broad, innovative prospect lets us interact on a practical level with people so that our prospect takes on flesh and blood in reality. The prospect can become a lever for action, once it finds its firm fulcrum in daily reality. The prospect of a purely French socialism is a trump card in the fight, because it spotlights the possible solution amid the murk of contradictions that now surrounds us. It is not enough to sit about and dream of a fairer, more equitable society. We convince people that it is indeed feasible to work at it right now, without waiting, and without falling into the illusion that there might be shortcuts available if only we would hustle the worker movement: that would lead only to dead ends.

In this connection, a rereading, in the light of the year just ended, of some passages of the minutes of the 24th congress as to the democratic path is remarkably enlightening. I quote: "Neither granted as a favor nor planned from on high, socialism demands real effort in the process of building, through struggle, the conditions for the shift to socialism, with our only timetable the one set by the needs of the masses, their level of awareness, and the development of the balance of forces."

We are now in the process of looking through that timetable, as we accumulate further depth in a background of experience that is already rich and solid.

From one month -- sometimes from one week -- to the next, we gain further assurance of the degree to which this step-by-step approach is indeed the highroad to all-out class struggle, to a confrontation in which "the opponents of change are pressing and will continue to press with all their might to deceive, to obfuscate, to mislead, to threaten, to divide." "Progress can come only from defeat forcibly thrust upon capital, and every inch of progress establishes a fulcrum from which to force it into still further retreat."

Abstract as they may be in the proceedings of our congresses, these ideas already summon to mind thousands of examples from all areas of our national life.

Although the commentators have difficulty grasping the fact that our presence in government stems from our strategy, not from any headlong rush for a shelter of opportunity, where we should have to grope blindly for our identity, with no alternatives save to knuckle under or resign! The truth is that we communists feel that we have a better grip on the potentialities of the situation, on all its possible dynamics, and we say so, even when we are the ones leading the chorus of reservations about the Delors Plan!

I should like to emphasize here the way our approach takes on added assurance as it is translated into action, as it faces reality and sees it whole, and as it frankly admits the difficulties inherent in its implementation.

Nothing new ever looks easier or more effective at first blush, especially if it clashes with comfortable habits deeply ingrained in the workers' consciousness and in our own activist practices.

Some Ideas to Topple the Remaining Barriers

So that we may fully understand the new thing that is taking form in the rising tide of our influence, the Central Committee emphasizes the connection between our political practice -- that of the 24th congress -- and the actual experiences people are living through under these crisis conditions, both of them only beginning.

Three of the key ideas from our recent congresses are starting to materialize and to become part of the political landscape, part of the way people think:

1. We are determined, in all circumstances, to respect the structure, the content, and the pace of social evolution which the voters, in the exercise of their sovereign right, have chosen.

2. We have pledged, within that structure, and without any outside coercion of the popular movement, to make an effective contribution toward solving the problems which face us in the interests of the people and of the nation.

3. We are committed to work at the renewal of our influence ; (the key to any progress toward the necessary transformations) by providing practical evidence of our usefulness, our capacity to clarify and inspire, to give impetus to the social movement: in a word, to build.

In December 1981 Georges Marchais spelled out our concept of action in these terms: "Not so much to report as to explain; not so much to criticize as to propose; not merely to explain or propose, but to build, to obtain, to achieve, to make things happen: there you have, in all areas, the rule of action for today's communists."

This is how the 24th congress formulated the major problem confronting us, and it is indeed simpler to state than to solve: "The considerable disparity between the objective requirements for transforming society and the political awareness of the popular forces as it is today, between the level of the solutions made mandatory by the quest for a way out of the crisis and that of the goals around which it is possible at this point in time to rally broad support to advance."

Well, in just a year, something has begun to move, in the way things are, in ideas, and in our capacity for intervention. Let us be very careful to avoid a mechanical, static perception of that "gap." Consider, for example, the way the "produce French" idea has become, in 2 or 3 years, an idea embraced by the broad majority, despite the persistence of confusion as to the cause of the crisis, its inevitability, and the best way to move effectively to produce French.

Ideas jostle one another, and are telescoped in the process into an active, stimulating blend of new thinking and old prejudices. It is precisely at the heart of this blend that the latest Central Committee meeting proposes to intervene, along five great thrust-lines of proposal for action. At the heart of this blend, which is to say at the point where, in this spring of 1983, the concerns and the questions which are deeply stirring the popular movement. By expressing, by making practical and understandable, on the basis of the questions as they are stated now, and within the political context of the 1981 decisions, some new and effective answers that embody the meaning of our great outlook for true French socialism.

I am going to dwell on this a little longer because, I believe, it is vital to understand just how far we have come in implementing our strategy.

We are now in a position -- and this is precisely what is new -- to go beyond a report which, as it turned out, severed the broad affirmation of our political vision of truly French socialism from the practical problems the people were striving to cope with.

We have come a long way from the days when, as we waited for a joint program ready for application, as we waited for "D-day, and for the arrival -- always from "on high" -- of the format and the limits of our "immediate objectives."

1. We are beginning with the hopes and aspirations that shaped the governing majority in 1981 and the content of our agreement to join the PS in government: jobs, justice, national production, and international cooperation.

2. We highlight, within this context, the issues before us which the people are starting to raise in order to manage efficiently, to succeed, to resolve.

3. We are expressing, in a direct and simple way, some ideas that lend timeliness and credibility to our concept of the forward march of French society.

With the light of 2 years' experience, we have consigned the notion that it would be enough merely to change the government in order to settle the problems of unemployment, of inflation, and of foreign trade balances to the waste-basket.

New questions loom on the horizon: can a Leftist policy work? If the crisis is indeed external, world-wide, have we any choice but to sit back and wait for a hypothetical American or West German recovery to pull us back up?

-- How can we reduce the pressure of the dollar and bring down the deficit without lowering consumption levels as we hope for an upturn?

-- How do we set about fueling new growth, stopping the decline in industrial jobs, getting production going again, creating jobs?

-- How do we finance recovery without sacrificing the workers' purchasing power?

These questions, at once very practical and very basic, now firmly on the agenda, lead us into a debate in depth as to the causes of the crisis; a wide-open debate, where our ideas are getting quite a different hearing from what they got 2 years ago, when we still cherished the illusion that change "from on high" would fix everything!

Whether we're talking about purchasing power, jobs, or, in another key, disarmament and peace, we are asserting, by positive action, with the people, our determination to consolidate, to enhance the chances of the march forward: in other words, our determined drive for struggle and union.

From the Act to the Thought

The commentators are doing their level best to refute our negative assessment of the Delors plan and our majority commitment. And yet it is precisely our honoring commitments made, our abiding by the decisions of 1981, that gives credibility to our determination to work for a positive solution to the problems raised and encourages a more attentive hearing for the original solutions we formulate, the initiatives for action we develop.

These proposals, these initiatives draw their innovative and efficacious content from the basic responses we advocate to the crisis, responses rooted in the hard-core reality of the crisis, and opening onto the prospect of truly French socialism.

This is why we can be, at one and the same time, both very daring and very realistic. One example, drawn from among many more, will serve to demonstrate how much better ideas get across when we can give practical, down-to-earth expression to our proposals, without waiting passively for the day when people will turn at last to the "ready-to-wear" rack of our 131 proposals.

Now we can push our thinking, our ideas about /produce French/ much further ahead: how can we produce more efficiently, with what markets, what productivity levels, what financing? The questions of standards for decision-making and management, of current utilization of capital, and of financial waste loom ever larger in the concerns of workers, even as their new rights open up new possibilities of responding to them better, more practically, inside the corporations.

The very way we approach these issues shows, in action rather than in words, the active, positive role the communists can play in solving our problems, using our new rights, and in the new possibilities of cooperation among workers, cadres and technicians, and office employees.

We can, by our behavior, or approach to action, show "in acts" that we are neither "statists" nor "collectivists," but that we are putting forward some original and practical ideas about inter-corporate ties, planning contracts, and new forms of international co-operation.

We can, in dialogue and in debate, in the initiative for action, push the movement forward, and gain ground ourselves as we show we can do it.

We can do all this, I repeat, not on the basis of a programmatic approach, or cut-and-dried formulas which we would try to force into the arena of real life and of ideas, heedless of the developments under way in that arena; but on the basis of the cogent tenets we have developed in the past 2 years and in the context of majority objectives and ideas, around practical lines of thrust, which espouse the diversity of situations and respond to the experience, the concerns, the worries of those with whom we engage in dialogue, in a given company, in a given city, with reference to a specific problem.

And we see a lot more clearly:

-- that the respect of the majority movement is not a passive status quo by a dynamic of confrontations, in which simply staying on the charted course furthers both the stakes and the popular movement.
-- that letting the people set the pace, far from blurring the angles of the class struggle, motivates us take more practical and hence more efficacious action on all grounds where hopes and aspirations clash with the counteroffensive of the employers and the Right.

-- that this is precisely where the key lies to the problems that face us, to advance, in a situation that expands our possibilities, but also heightens our responsibility, to develop our own capacity to intervene in society, to engage in dialogue, to listen, or to propose. To put it another way, to give positive proof of our political effectiveness as a communist party that knows how to move forward.

Only a Beginning

The more clearly we perceive the possibilities inherent in our strategy, the more we, as responsible party members, demand of ourselves. Because we still have a long way to go!

We see quite clearly the dimensions of the obstacles, the issues to be resolved, and what remains to be won in order to deploy, in all its rich fecundity, the political approach which is ours from now on.

The issues this last session of the Central Committee bids us grapple with are not, you will agree, marginal problems: business, youth, the associative movement... It makes it that much more worthwhile to deal with them if we take the measure of all that is at stake and if we see our possibilities, as well as our responsibilities, more clearly.

On a world scale, on a French scale, we are living through what is in many respects a crucial period.

In other times, to cope with a crisis far less profound and far less inherent in the structure, capitalists found in war or in

colonialist rapine a measure of respite, destructive, of course, but nevertheless effective from their class point of view. Today some decisive steps forward can be taken, in the direction of the increasingly diverse movement of peoples toward liberation, by socialism. The liberation movement is one that is powerful enough right now to halt imperialism's resort to excessive armament, to war, or to the pillage of peoples.

France itself is one of the places on this planet where, in an altogether new situation, with the transformations already begun, the heightened class antagonisms are still patient of positive developments.

In such a context, what becomes of the PCF, of its capacity for action, and of its influence takes on importance reaching far beyond our borders. The tremendous pressures set upon us in wave after wave so as to destabilize us have no other cause.

Some of them doubtless believed at one time that they had achieved their aims. The coincidence of the serious decline of our influence in 1981, of our joining the majority in an unfavorable balance of power, our participation in government during a period of profound crisis in the whole society allowed them to hope that we had become vulnerable.

They were wrong! They say that our presence in government dooms us to the impossible choice of dissolving ourselves as a left-wing component of some social democrat magma, or putting ourselves on the sidelines by returning to Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy.

They are radically wrong! Our strategy puts us on the offensive in a French society pregnant with necessary evolutions. We now have a thorough grasp of those evolutions, we understand them better, we see more clearly how to intervene in a constructive way so as to hasten them.

Far from confining us or crippling us, far from forbidding us to be completely ourselves, our presence in government provides us with a permanent incentive -- what a salutary constraint! -- to grasp the total reality of our society, the core realities of things and ideas, the problems as they arise for the people and as they are experienced, without dodging issues that are new to us yet crucial to the country, like those of mastering the economic balances as we move toward fairer and more effective new growth.

The facts confront us with the necessity for asserting our ability to solve the problems, to open up new roads.

More than a century ago, when the founders of Marxism discovered in practical critique of capitalist society the emancipating role of the working class, they opened up prospects that were historically new to revolutionary combat.

By making itself a part of the real world, the communist ideal has ripened in the 20th century to match the sometimes harsh or even tragic colors of an era unprecedented in human history. As protagonists in this saga ourselves, we get the feeling that a lot may depend on us, if we manage to play from the new strengths that our original approach gives us, in the situation as it really is.

Between understanding matters and real transforming action there is full scope for free human intervention. It is because we have all perceived the need to spurn inevitability, for personal commitment, and for collective action that we became communists. It is why we seek, without smugness, without self-congratulation, to get a clear view of the efforts it will take to intervene effectively in reality, with full awareness of possibilities in our hands.

Those who believe, right now, that we are constrained to water our colors on the pretext of participation in government are clear off the track. The goal for us is to be much more and much more completely French-style communists.

To be alert and attentive to day-by-day events, to listen to the people, keen in their capacity to take the initiative, precise and effective in their proposals, convincing in their actions, we communists need more than ever to exchange ideas and experiences. Their need for training and knowledge takes many forms, and is a hard taskmaster.

They have powerful tools to help them meet those demands in the daily lives of their local cells, with their press and their books. Now they must take full advantage of all that offers. Nothing can ever replace personal efforts at thinking and at character-building. It is our collective responsibility as leaders, all the way from the Central Committee to the neighborhood section, to create the best possible political and organizational conditions to permit every man and woman of us to take part in the seminars and schools that are available among the rank and file, at the federal and national levels; to create these conditions with imagination and tenacity, because the expression of the need for building character does not spontaneously lead, even when the request for it is spoken, to finding the time indispensable for this pursuit, be it in the evening, on week-ends, over the space of one month or four...

The success of this Ascension weekend seminar confirms both the need and the possibility for moving ahead in this direction, now that the initiative taken responds so well, in its patterns and in its content, to the concerns and needs of communist who seek to be, even more than they are now, "rich in ideas and initiative."

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GAYSSOT ON PCF ROLE, REQUIREMENTS IN INDUSTRY, BUSINESS

Paris CAHIERS DU COMMUNISME in French Jun 83 pp 38-49

[Lecture by Political Bureau Member Jean-Claude Gayssot]

[Text] Ever since its birth, the Communist Party has made the fight to organize the Party in business and industry a keystone in its revolutionary battle. There have of course been ups and downs and even controversy inside the Party over this approach but, on the whole, it is typical of the PCF to have put business at the center of its battles. This, as a matter of fact, was one of its differences with the Socialist Party over its targeting its intervention on the area of election politics rather than on business. It is significant, from this point of view, that wherever the Socialist Party is traditionally strong we are often "steered away" from business.

Why Does the Communist Party Care About Business?

Basically, the choice of business is directly linked with the revolutionary content of our intervention. How can we hope to be accepted as full-fledged members of the working class, the party of all workers, unless we are present right where the class conflict is taking place (from the daily struggle to the great political and ideological issues), inside the company, inside the workplace?

Some Additional Reasons

We are ready to fight until we defeat the exclusive domination of capital. That domination is rooted in the corporation, the plant, the business, and its direct channel for expression is business.

We are out to build a socialist society, the French way. To do that, we must simultaneously help, practically and positively, to raise the issues the workers and the nation as a whole must face, and to change the political balance of power. What better place than in the workplace to struggle for jobs, for social and economic progress? What better place to fight against corporate decisions on capital management, to fight for a start at changing labor relations and for raising the consciousness of the people about the ability of the workers to take over and to advance the idea of the need for a stronger PCF?

The nature of this crisis, its depth and its persistence, have endowed our battle inside the corporations with a new dimension. It amounts to this: letting capital do as it pleases is to sink deeper into the difficulties. Although during the entire period of the "great takeoff" of monopoly state capital the big bourgeoisie could delude itself as to its ability to run things, nowadays we can show more clearly just what a poor position it is in when it presumes to forbid workers to take an interest in management affairs. The ability to find and implement solutions to the problems of our time does not lie on their side.

If we are to move toward a positive resolution of the crisis, our country needs to build socialism. This is not a spontaneous, subjective vision; this opinion is based on the incapacity of big capital to respond to present and future needs. Some very heavy stakes are on the agenda; this is true in the domain of the sciences, of technologies, and of the social issues; it holds good for labor, for the fight against unemployment, the need for participation, and the role of new technology in freeing the individual from constraints and for enhancing the value of his task; it holds for the establishment of new kinds of human relations; it applies to the solution of the great national issues such as peace and disarmament, to the fight against hunger in the world, to the new international economic and political order.

All this adds up to very large stakes, to which big capital cannot respond because its very *raison d'être* is to accumulate, to make a profit, and to maintain its privileges.

Our "challenge to the crisis" cannot be maintained without an all-out struggle on the economic and social ground, on the ideological and political ground, inside the corporation itself.

Capital and the other political forces have felt this so acutely that they bitterly dispute the turf with us, and even score some points now and then. Everything in the corporation comes together on the aim of gaining acceptance -- as an inevitability -- for employer domination, so as to achieve consensus on the decisions and standards of capitalist management, and that includes trying to solve some of the new problems confronting capital, and with the permanent objective of diminishing the influence of the revolutionary worker movement.

To abandon the corporation would mean plunging headlong into all the permutations of the idea of the inevitability of the crisis, that of a consensus on austerity, and that of the futility of trying to change the course of events.

Abandoning the corporate turf also means that we ourselves harbor the notion that the union is enough, that it is possible, by no other means than workers' militant demands, without any political fights, to achieve lasting results and to change society; it amounts to believing that class consciousness is a spontaneous phenomenon.

You can go on as long as you like repeating that the PCF is the party of the working class and of the workers, but the critical factor would be lacking to prove it if, at the heart of their concern, of their exploitation within the corporation, the workers didn't see, nor hear, nor yet talk and argue with communists.

You can say as often as you like that the working class and the whole body of workers have a decisive role to play, that they are quite able to participate in directing the nation's affairs, but we should be depriving ourselves of the most effective way to demonstrate their fitness were we not there on the ground where that capacity is most hotly contested: I mean inside the corporation itself.

Political activity inside the plant is also the way to strengthen the unity of the working class and the convergence of all employees, their coming together to act for economic and social progress.

The great changes that have come about in the working class and in the world of work in general cry out even more loudly the need for political intervention. While during an entire period the working class and productive manual workers could practically be viewed as one and the same, the changes that have occurred and are still taking place have transformed the makeup of the working class. Today, side by side with skilled workers, whose tasks are more and more technical in nature, engineers and also office workers (even if only a minority of the latter) are an integral part of the working class. Well, it's one thing to belong to something, and quite another thing to be aware of it ("the working class is not fully constituted until it is aware of its strength and of its historic role"). We also know that even the class instinct does not always exist among the new categories who compose the working class. The divisive efforts of the employers, the intellectualization of the job, the differences among life-styles ... all contribute to fuel the notion that a whole world separates the skilled worker from the manufacturing engineer.

The massive employment of women, the growth of the tertiary sector and of cadres, the entry of 400,000 to 500,000 young people into businesses and plants each year are swelling the overriding need for political intervention in the workplace to encourage all of them to come together and to welcome the upcoming generations into battle for the revolutionary movement.

Ever Closer to the Heart of the Issues

In addition to all these reasons, old and new, there is yet another reason now for expanding our intervention in the work-place.

The fact is that, over the years, as we analyzed it in the course of our latest congress, our political practice and our strategy

tended to distance us from the workplace, Of course, things did get done, and the number of our plant cells did increase appreciably over the entire Joint Program period; but the tendency to attract malcontents, the previous practice of union and expectations of the "big night" when all the answers would suddenly be revealed, limited and distorted the content of our intervention in the workplace. Our approach, on the one hand, postponed solutions to the really big problems to some later date and above all, made them depend almost entirely on the state -- rather than on the company. To put it briefly, this gap between the day-to-day issues and the movement to transform the society led us to underestimate the importance of class-rooted labor action and at the same time to stunt the content of our political action in the work-place. And over the past few years the number of Party cells in the plants has dwindled and their activity has been curtailed. Organized labor, the CGT, has also lost some of its clout.

Today we have a better fix on the need of workers in every plant for a strong and effective union and for a strong and effective Communist Party. The need is the more urgent with the organization of the employers for political purposes, the massive rearrangements made at the top level of management, the number of highly diversified house organs, the new hiring procedures and the new barriers emplaced against the CGT and the PCF have been improved and advanced all during these years of change and crisis. The confluence of these various assets has led to a decline in the influence of the labor movement on class positions, notably in the big corporations. Since 1968, considerable effort has been expended to "adapt" business, as the big bosses put it, by which they mean to make it easier to keep it in the strait-jacket of capitalist management while giving the impression that things are changing. The bosses have been putting even more troops into the battle since 1981, as we saw when their States General met at Villepinte. The National Council of French Employers (CNPF) is still urging its member bosses to be active and to devote 10 percent of their time to "public affairs."

The bosses, though, are not the only ones. There are others who would like to take the ground we hold.

For its part, the Socialist Party claims to have 1,800 work-place sections or groups.

The RPR is also interested in corporations, particularly since 1981. Bernard Pons recently stated: "We have a firm conviction that the voters are mobilizing politically at their work-places and as a function of those plants." He claims to have 850 work-place sections whose objective is obviously to sabotage progress, to lay the groundwork for recovering power, but also to engage the political battle within certain labor organizations. They often concentrate their funds in the public sector and in government, to encourage denationalization.

The CFDT, too, is fighting its own battle at the political level, focusing on the issues of the crisis, socialism, and political rights in the work-place.

The General Confederation of Management Personnel (CGC) has spent the past 2 years playing the role of opposition to the government and to change. It also performs yeoman service, sending reinforcements whenever the bosses and the RPR are hard-pressed on such issues as workers' rights.

In the recently nationalized corporations as well as those that are publis-sector veterans, management has for years given weakening the revolutionary movement high on its agenda. We are not so naïve as to believe that all their resolve has somehow or other evaporated since May and June 1981.

Content of PCF Intervention in the Workplace

Communist intervention in the work-place must embrace the whole body of Party policy. From this point of view, there are no areas whatsoever in which there is no need to intervene.

Speaking Out on Political Issues

On the ground, inside the company, all the great political and ideological issues must be dealt with. This holds good for the struggle for peace and disarmament in support of demands. In this order of ideas, our exegeses of the crisis and of French socialism as an issue, our assessment of existing socialism, and, for instance, our battles for the elections become part of the political battle against the corporations.

Now we all know that some of us often oppose this behavior. Of course we say, and we repeat: "priority to the work-place," and yet we find in the event that the closer we come to the elections the further we get from the work-place: the recent municipal elections were a case in point. This deplorable habit is not only contrary to our strategy, which consists both in moving things as they are and awareness of them forward, step by step; it is also in conflict with all our hard work at winning elections. What about that working-class electorate that delivered a message to the Left in the first round of the municipal elections? Where is most of it to be found? In the plants! In the work-place, that's where! These workers -- laborers, office-workers, and middle-management people -- who, in the private or the public sector, feel that things just aren't moving fast enough or who are wondering about the steps that have been taken, about their new rights, about their purchasing power, or more generally about the Left's ability to manage -- where do they come into direct confrontation over these issues, if not on the job?

And therefore, on every single one of these issues, and on a permanent basis, the Communist Party's activity in the work-place must be viewed as essential. This, for that matter, is why regular distribution of HUMANITÉ DIMANCHE and REVOLUTION, and publication of plant journals are vital supports to the conduct of this activity. By distributing this material, we are manifesting the PCF's presence and our rejection of the bosses' monopoly hold on the issues. We are participating in the debate and in the clash of ideas on all the major issues.

New Targets, New Weapons for the Work-place

Intervention in the work-place does not stop here, though: we must also act to transform, to reform the corporation itself. If we were to stop with general propaganda, neglecting action on the corporation's home turf, we should not truly be responding to the situation. The issues raised by the crisis and the implementation of our strategy in fact demand our speaking out on wages and salaries in all categories so that life on the job will be better and so that the corporation will be run better, readier to respond to economic and social needs. This is all the more necessary since the class struggle, far from withering away, has waxed even hotter since the Left moved into government.

The recent CC meeting put the emphasis on this question, as well as on this companion to it: How do we go about it?

With our proposal for five major lines of action -- which were, I remind you, the fight for jobs and occupational training, the fight for better living and working conditions, action to get French production rolling again, the fight for financing, the establishment of international and mutually advantageous cooperation -- we were not trying to lock ourselves into a program, but to establish the framework within which -- depending on the possibilities and on the issues in question -- we must help the workers to take a hand and get things moving.

The content of these five lines of action clearly shows that we must hold the ground of labor relations, as well as that of the ways and means to be deployed everywhere so things will "work." This means that the domination of class against the decisions of capital, both in the area of living conditions, wages and salaries, the job, and in the realm of management itself, must be an integral part of everything we do in the work-place. Wherever we go we must seek out and push for practical proposals that can rally blue-collar workers in every plant to action.

Isn't going beyond the wage-demand approach or protesting the big bosses' policy and expanding our operations onto the ground of constructive proposals and speaking out on management issues coming dangerously close to dabbling in class collaboration? We must be

clear about this. If there is a danger today, it is the danger of abandoning this ground to capitalist initiative. Every time our proposals translate into action against austerity, for jobs, for training, against discrimination, for getting this nation's industry going again and utilizing the wealth it creates for useful purposes, and for advantageous international cooperation, we are opposing the strategy of decline and decay pursued by the Right and by capital; we are striking out against capital flight or against financial return as the sole criterion; we are helping banish the myth that the crisis is inevitable. To fail to be concerned about these issues is, when all is said and done, to abandon the field without a fight, leaving it to the exclusive criteria of capital and to the idea of inevitability, and hence ultimately to class collaboration.

Action for French production and jobs relies today on the government's objective of winning back the domestic market. This action calls for a new industrial policy; it calls for inter-company cooperation among workers and their elected representatives; between users and producers of materials to solve the problems of jobs, prices, quantities, suitability, and financing. On this score, I should like to put in a good word for the help we can get from ECONOMIE ET POLITIQUE.

It is all the more important to act along these five basic lines in that wage-earners today have new possibilities open to them. With the expansion of the public and nationalized sector, with the new rights voted into law by the National Assembly, with the Left running the government, with decentralization and the rest of it, the ways and means for intervention are enhanced. But we must make sure that, in each case, they are the stakes for a no-quarter class struggle. Well, we must admit that as yet there is insufficient awareness within the worker movement of these new possibilities, when there is not plain ignorance of them. Furthermore, the bosses, who see red whenever the workers win some rights, are not going to be satisfied with merely tossing as many monkey-wrenches into the works at the National Assembly as they possibly can: they have also invested a lot of money and a lot of influence in efforts to thwart, limit, or turn the new regulations to their own advantage.

On all these issues, without pre-empting the role that belongs by right to the labor organizations, the Communist Party's activity in the work-place must encourage workers to speak out, by showing them the possibilities and by coming up with proposals that will rally the workers and move them to action.

Our efforts to transform the corporation and to open it up to all quarters of the labor-management relationship also involves speaking out on all the issues which, though not involved in production do concern the workers. One such, for instance, is the fight to make the connection between the schools and everyday life, and others are the issues of immigration and housing.

Reach Out Boldly to All Wage-Earners

The CC dwelt at length on the need for including the whole company and all who work for it in our reckoning. All too often we tend to talk only to some of them, even when there is a dispute under way. What we are actually doing when we do this is robbing ourselves of the one way to shift the balance of power in favor of the workers.

This way, though, taking the whole company as it is, and all the workers, whatever their jobs, will help further relations among the various categories of workers without neglecting their specific needs. Will there be complications? Of course there will! It is out of the collectivity of the workers and out of ideas to make the company a better place to work and a more efficient operation that solutions will emerge.

Insofar as concerns specialized and skilled workers, we have to expand our reckoning, here again, to include the changes that occur with the introduction of new technology, the new place of the skilled and specialized workers in the production process, the real differences in their backgrounds and activities, the presence of lots of women and lots of immigrants in specialized labor-intensive companies, etc. There are other wage-earners working side by side with the workers. In a great many manufacturing companies, for example, our outreach to white-collar workers is all but non-existent. And yet these workers are also confronted with needs, with problems; the bosses are very good at filling the vacuum that results, and they use that skill to divide the workers and set them against each other.

With the massive entry of women into wage-earning work, particularly in the tertiary sector, any lack of concern toward them is prejudicial to the general struggle of the entire working class; a département like Pas-de-Calais, for example, has more than 100,000 office workers, and there are over 5 million of them in France. That raises the question of the quality of the Communist Party's approach to them. Telling them over and over that their living conditions make them, ipso facto, one with the working class will not make them understand any better that the PCF is their party; we must act to help them solve their problems: problems with the job, with the way work is assigned, the introduction of technologies such as data processing, the matter of training and rights to it -- but we must also take action to make whatever their service or their plant produces better suited to the needs of production and of the people in general. Here again we find our two ideas: a better time of it on the job, and making the company work better.

As for the technicians and engineers (more than 2 million in France and, in some companies accounting for 20, 30, and sometimes more than 50 percent of the payroll), the Party's activities once again fail to measure up to the need. A great many of these people belong to the working class. Here again, the goal of bringing them together

must be a central concern. How do we mount effective action? How do we talk about technologies? How do we get a voice in management without first making contact with these groups? How do we start to build new relations among the workers, the office staffs, the technicians, the engineers, and the middle-management people if our activities ignore them or simply write them off as irredeemable pawns of the bosses?

More generally, on the turf of most communist sections, it would be wise to make a thorough examination of all the companies and all the plants in the area, rather than sticking to the traditional sector alone. There are many plants where the Communist Party is not present as such. I have mentioned the tertiary sector, and it is true of small and medium companies, but it is also true of recently founded companies or plants where the PCF is only rarely heard from, and of the new industrial zones, not to mention the administrative enclaves. What image of the Communist Party do they get in those areas?

To sum up, I shall say that we must make our approach one that really covers the whole ground, reaching out to every man and woman who works there, making due allowance for their uniqueness; and we must do it with firm determination to unite them, to bring together the women, young people, immigrants, retirees, office workers, skilled and specialized workers, technicians, engineers, and middle management people.

Adjusting Our Political Practice

This priority effort aimed at companies implies application of a new political practice. It will consist first of all in devising a constructive approach, not merely challenging the decisions of capital and of the Right, but formulating and advancing proposals to help solve problems. That is true in general, and it is true of our activities in the companies and in the plants.

Here I should like to give you my view on an argument that sometimes crops up among ourselves, and which draws a distinction between "offensive" and "defensive" struggles. All struggles are both. Workers who oppose plant closings are right: they are defending themselves and at the same time they are challenging the concept of inevitability. But what we are saying today goes farther: we must make understandable proposals during these struggles. Of course it is always necessary in debate over ideas to show the consistency of our approach and of the solutions we suggest; what we must not do is to make all possible progress hostage to this or that proposal which is far ahead of the consistent body of our overall action. In other words, let's not assume everybody has fully grasped our point that French socialism is the only way out of the crisis, and that this one point is enough to spur everybody to action. If, though, we can get people to act on an issue that directly concerns them, we are leading the debate on ideas so as to clarify the overall picture.

Step by step, we can change things as they are and change people's awareness of them, being careful to dismiss the notion that we could insure the resurgence of our influence by superficial activity whose sole achievement would be to corral all the malcontents.

The idea is to stick to the issues, big ones as well as little ones, making it our goal to solve them, not just make causes out of them: this is all-important. Often we toss out ideas and engage in battles, but we must fight them to the end, aiming each time at victory, and each time using it to its fullest potential. Making the most of the fruits of victory is vital to show what can be done, to prove that by taking their stand on the spot the workers can indeed get things moving. Our old guidelines did not call for making the most of every small victory, lest doing so would distract us from our drive toward a global transformation of society, which took preference over everything else.

Another new policy guideline calls for making use of every edge, every possibility, even if we know it's a gamble.

We've already said that putting pressure on the public sector to make it really play its role in getting a new start going for production, for jobs, for better utilization of resources, for developing democracy, is easier now than it used to be. And so the very fact that the Left is now in power can lead to a forceful comeback of the idea of delegating power. In how many companies is the first reaction, when a problem comes up, to beg government or Parliament to settle it! Of course, this is not to dodge government responsibilities when they exist, but we must foster the idea that when the chips are down, what counts is the ability to step in on the spot that brings victory. The expansion of the public sector, the new rights of workers, and decentralization open up a field of intervention far more vast than heretofore for the labor organizations, the delegates, the plant committees, the unions -- but also for elected city, département, and regional officials. You will surely be talking about this tomorrow, but I should like just to underscore the great advantage to our members and our section leaders of being fully informed and hence thoroughly familiar with the essence of these newly won rights and interests.

The fact that we have a government of the Left, coupled with such salutary policies as recapturing the domestic market, constitute so many points of support on which the workers can draw.

Putting the new policy into practice means, ultimately, taking the frank and open approach, making proposals, listening, and talking things over. Reaching out to people to tell them what we think about the issues they raise, but also listening to what they think.

In the plant, this means being there wherever the problems are talked about, giving our opinions, making people think about this or

that aspect of the issue. The bosses are setting up "quality groups" whose twofold purpose is to solve the real problems posed to them by the crisis in the work process, and to keep the workers' movement out of the settlement. The law today calls for the workers to have a direct voice in negotiations with the unions (in something like shop or office councils) -- well, then! Whether we're talking about quality circles or direct expression, our members must be there to argue the issues that concern the wage-earners and to get things moving.

Again, this kind of approach can nurture new relations among the various categories, the kind that can foil all management's attempts to set worker against worker, and dash its hopes of using the cadres to do its dirty work.

More generally, in our view, reaching out to people means being frank and open in our search for solutions that will be good for the workers and good for the country, not to wait until we have everything mapped out in detail before talking to the wage-earners, and, while rejecting the bosses' ideas, giving them our opinions and calling on those involved to talk things over and thus enrich and advance our proposals.

Ways and Means

In the work-place, we must move ahead and work on the idea that the workers need an active union, close to them, with protecting their interests -- moral and material -- at heart. The Central Committee returned to this point. We assign a great deal of importance to having an active union section in every company. The union is ultimately responsible for leading worker-demand struggles. Communists, as union members, have a stake in the success of CGT initiatives, while abiding by its program and its statutes. They bring the directions of its 41st congress to life, so that their union will be as close as possible to the workers. In the spirit of "new clothes for spring," which Henri Krasucki recently evoked, they will be diligent in combating anything that tends to put distance between the workers' delegates and their organizations and concerne.

Passage of the new laws (right to expression, negotiating role of the unions on wage issues, job conditions and organization, the role of health and safety committees, plant committees, the role of the wage-earners in management councils, increasing the number of delegates, new access and new rights in small and medium industry and groups) confers a new dimension and new responsibilities upon union sections and union locals.

At the same time, however, the Communist Party has no idea of delegating any of its responsibilities on any economic, social, or political issue affecting workers or the corporation to anybody. Nobody will stand in our place to help push through the main thrusts of our policy and our concrete proposals for gaining ground.

The workers' movement as a force for change needs both feet in the work-place; it needs the union, and it needs the Communist Party.

The Right Tool for the Job: the Company Cell

To get on with implementation of our policy in the corporation and to put the stamp of a new style on it, the right tool for the job is the company cell. Upon their birth, upon their emergence where none was before, depends in decisive measure the success of our strategy. Now, while everybody admits this in statements, in speeches, or in reports inside the Party organizations, there is not much hard evidence that it has as yet penetrated the content of our work: the responsibility of our leadership, particularly in the sections, the assignment of cadres and the tasks they are set, maximum utilization of the whole membership potential found in the company and, as part of this, ongoing concern with keeping good leaders in the work-place.

Each section, company section or not, has companies in its territory, and every section head must therefore make it his pressing and ongoing concern to help with the creation of new cells, even to the extent of providing assistance from outside. Political and material help in leadership for company cell secretaries, who carry a considerable load of responsibility, should be a prime concern, with all that implies by way of availability of time and counsel. That is not yet a very widespread behavior pattern in the Party. Far too few sections make it a point to help company cells with their work and to see to it that they have the means they need. We are still seeing cells go under, though we ought to be helping all of them to stay alive, even if they number only three or four communists. In too few places we mount stubborn and lengthy struggles to set up company cells where there still are none, and in companies where there are not enough of us.

Taking the whole company into account should also translate into a far larger number of cells, making it possible to cover every unit as well as the various services.

You will have a chance to come back to these questions with Paul Laurent. I should simply like to say that what we must do now is to breathe life into the decisions of the Saclas CC meeting. In this area, as in others concerning the company, there is too long a lag between decisions and their translation into action, when there is not a wrong-headed decision, like merging several company cells into a single one on the pretext that some of them weren't working right. The reason why the Saclas CC recommended combining sections with only a handful of members was to strengthen the sections' political leadership and resources vis-à-vis the cells.

The reason why we lay so much stress on the need to help the cells is that they are the indispensable tool for explaining CP policy, for keeping up with problems as they arise, and for making changes

on the basis of the facts, and in the certainty that the workers are aware of the facts.

In every undertaking, in every plan of action, in every struggle one question arises, and it is this: how is this action going to help the cells to intervene, to reach out to the people? You have a great responsibility, as section secretaries, to make sure that the whole Party is imbued with this approach. To make it really come alive without letting it be turned aside is the key to our advances in the future. Broadening your scope to embrace whole companies and all the people on their payrolls, inter-company solidarity, linkage between political battles and the real problems of jobs, production, living and working conditions and the quantitative and qualitative enhancement of intervention by company cells are the central tasks for your sections' activities.

Very soon, now, we shall be called upon for a reckoning, on a national scale, of the progress achieved in this vital task in the management of all companies and all of each company, along with all our cells and all the people in them. Already, with the month of May upon us and the move to step up action in companies with largely female work forces, we can start looking forward to a new kind of work, dealing with wage-earning women and strengthening the PCF with new members and the creation of new cells.

Generally speaking, we want to see to it that every communist, every leader at every level feels personally accountable for the implications of the core concept of the 24th congress: "The resurgence of our influence, democratic progress toward socialism, depends on the new political approach we must find a way to implement in the workplace."

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MARCHAIS ON PCF INFLUENCE, RESPONSIBILITY: ELECTIONS

Paris CAHIERS DU COMMUNISME in French Jun 83 pp 50-58

[Lecture by PCF Secretary-General Georges Marchais: "The workers, the people's parties, and France herself have great need of the Communist Party!"]

The decision to convene a nationwide indoctrination and refresher course for secretaries of the major Party sections was an ambitious one.

Allow me, before I go any further, to rejoice in its success. There are more than 500 of you here, taking part in this course. And there would have been even more of you had it been possible to provide suitable accommodations for all the comrades who would have liked to be here with you because -- it's no secret -- we had to turn away a lot of people!

No More Painting Communists as Robots!

Naturally, that's going to irk some of our opponents a bit. Get together to sit and think, to talk to one another, over the whole Ascension break? Yes indeed, they're a breed apart, these communists; they're fanatics, the lot of them, all cast in the same mold, no individual personality, and totally interchangeable...

If only they'd been here! This course provides startling proof that the exact opposite is true!

You're "fanatics" are you, all "cast in the same mold"? They should have been here to see you and listen to you! It would take a very clever caricaturist to do a portrait of the communist as robot! Every one of you is different: different in your experience, in the things you know, in the things you are sensitive to, in your tastes, your habits, the way you go about things -- and you certainly showed that in your debates, among yourselves and with Party leaders, with a frankness and a freedom of tone that are not at all the thing in other political parties.

After all, that's the way communists are: free and responsible men and women, united in the conviction that the work their Party does is useful and efficacious, and that they can make it even better. There is nothing uniform in all this, but there is a collective richness to it that is born of your diversity, of the uniqueness of each one of you. And there, for that matter, is the reason you have come here for these 4 days: not to cling to the dusty certitudes of dogma, but to draw ever closer to reality, to look closely at the things that are changing, to shun any delay, to seize all the new opportunities the situation affords for moving ahead.

When you behave like this, are you truly "a breed apart"? Look, now: all we talked about during this course was what is dearest to people's hearts! You talked about the hopes and fears that each and every one of us can feel today. About jobs, about purchasing power, about living and working conditions. About France and its future, its place in the world, about peace and about disarmament. And above all, about ways and means for moving ahead, for altering the course events are taking.

Basically, that is what so angers our adversaries: because we communists are the living embodiment of the rejection of inevitability. That is what is behind the current outburst of anti-communism. Just listen to them: the communists are everywhere ... but at the same time they say we have all but vanished. They say we are still "Stalinists," yet at the same time that we are worse "renegades" than ever. They say we pull the strings of government and, at the same time, that we'll swallow any affront just to stay there... That sweet reason has no place among all these contradictory idiocies doesn't matter, so long as they distort, caricature, and throw mud at the real goals and policies of the French Communist Party!

We Are the Volunteers of Hope

Are we to be frightened by all this? Of course not! First, because we ourselves have seen worse. And above all because we were the first to undergo such attacks: since time began, the conservative forces have done their best to find "sound reason" to preach that all action to change things is vain, and that the world and its peoples must be resigned to misfortune as their destined lot.

The privileges of birth, the inequality of conditions, the tyranny of an absolute monarch? "Resign yourselves. It's Nature's law. It's God's will," they proclaimed. Even so, the French Revolution did take place....

Children toiling in the factories, starvation wages, physical exhaustion and debilitation on the job? "Resign yourselves; that's the price of progress," they assured us. Even so, the working class did wrest out laws protecting labor, did build the unions, did win retirement pensions and paid vacations.

Slavery, colonial oppression, the plunder of peoples? "Resign yourselves! There's a depression on; it is world-wide, and there is nothing we can do about it..." There's a depression, "so" we must accept the fact that most of us must go on coping with difficulties and making sacrifices which 1.5 percent of French families possess a quarter of the wealth of France. We are to accept as inevitable the fact that more than 2 million men, women, and young people are undergoing the tragedy of unemployment; that neither hard working conditions nor hierarchical ties, nor management ways change in the corporations; that the sons and daughters of working-class families are tagged for failure in school; that working-class households see their housing deteriorating around them, along with their environment, or their safety; that racism is rampant, and that leaky barrels of dioxin trundle along our roads by night, bound nobody knows where... And, on top of all this, and "because" this is a crisis, we are supposed to watch silently as trillions of francs are swallowed up in the mad arms race, to sit in silence while whole peoples are decimated by hunger, disease, and the other ills of underdevelopment.

I say no! We communists will never accept talk like that! We don't believe in fate, not we. What we do believe is that men and women are not made to be oppressed and humiliated: that they are made to be happy. It is this, the profound conviction that inspires us and makes us fight with such ardor for human liberation. We struggle for a new society, for a new world: a world of human rights, of peace, of justice, of freedom. Let others preach the gospel of resignation: we are the volunteers of hope.

It is our communist ideal that makes us like this. An ideal that does not come from "outside," but whose roots strike deep into the inmost heart of our French history, into all the uprisings of our people against arbitrary power and disdain, in the action of all the revolutionaries who have gone before us, from 1789 to 1848, from the Communards to Jaures, from those who gathered at the Congress of Tours to the generations of communists who have helped to fashion our Party.

A Lucid Analysis of Things as They Are

But, more profoundly, as I see it, this is the heart of the Marxist attitude: our reasons for hoping and fighting come primarily from a lucid analysis of things as they are.

Is this crisis indeed world-wide, inevitable, and incurable? Our minute analysis of the most impeccable data enables us to answer: "No, it is not."

I explained it again at the last session of our CC, using the work of our 24th congress and the lecture on "The French Challenge to the Crisis" as my texts to demonstrate that the crisis has not hit every country in the world indiscriminately. Some countries are

still forging ahead right now: they are the countries that are building a socialist society. Others, the Third World countries, are weathering tremendous troubles: they stem first from colonialism, from neocolonialism, and from the fallout of the crisis in the capitalist countries upon their own economies. It is these latter countries, all of them, that are caught up in a profound crisis, because the system that supports them, the capitalist system itself, is in crisis; and we find that all the factors for its worsening over the next few years are there, in place.

And so we are aware of the real reasons for the crisis; of the obstacles -- external and internal -- which are set in our way; of the cards we hold to defeat them, with the social, economic, and democratic reforms generated by the government of the Left; and finally, of the kind of response demanded by the nature of the problems posed: a profound social transformation, a socialist society designed from start to finish to be purely French, beginning with the needs, the tastes, and the aspirations of our people. In other words, whatever the censorious may say, not only are we not steering blindly: we know very precisely -- and admittedly it has been rare in the history of our Party for us to know so very precisely -- where we are and whither we are bound. I said at the close of the last session of our CC that what our action is designed to achieve is clear: "To bring to fruition, through the people's intervention, all the potential created by the situation that flowered in 1981, and from it bring new promise to birth."

A Period of Apprenticeship

Of course, behavior of this kind does not just happen. For us communists, it is something new. For decades, we have been laboring in the opposition. We have been part of all our people's battles to force the big bosses and the government of the Right into retreat. We have been a great force in challenge, in action, one that has helped advance justice and democracy, and which contributed to the rallying of forces that assured the victory of the Left in 1981.

Of course, habits deepen with the years, and we must learn now to shed them, to leave them behind. To a large degree, it is another political approach, a new way of being activists -- leave off waiting for the word from "above," never put off anything till "later" -- that we must learn and make our own. And we must do it, of course, because we are part of the government and of the majority, and because there is a better chance that our action will be efficacious. But above all, and essentially, because we must carefully weigh all the implications of our accustomed ways of doing things contained in the basic strategic modifications we have made in our last three congresses, by setting our sights on advancing along democratic paths toward a socialism that is itself democratic, toward a truly French brand of socialism.

Will doing this take effort? Without any doubt. Giving up some long-cherished attitudes, correcting the shortcomings we underscored at the CC session, adapting to unheard-of and untried behavior...you can't just improvise all that overnight. As I said before: "We are in a period of apprenticeship, and we are all learning now, from the cells to the Central Committee."

But we must make this effort, and we can do it.

A Broader Field for Action

For that matter, we have already made a beginning: we've been at it for 2 years, now. And we've done it in a situation that was painfully difficult for us: a serious decline in our Party's strength at the polls, our position of weakness in the majority and in the government, and a profound crisis in our society. We are now reaping the first fruits of our efforts. The municipal elections clearly revealed a rising tide in our influence. What we must do now is to keep moving resolutely in this direction, aware that a broader field for action lies before us.

This is true particularly in the work-place, provided we take full advantage -- and we are still a long way from doing that -- of the new rights now enjoyed by working men and women. To contribute toward their active intervention, the CC has suggested five major lines of action. I remind you that this has nothing to do with sewing ourselves up in a hard-and-fast program, but simply aims at pointing out the kind of initiative that has become feasible, on the basis of the actual situation of the company and all who work for it, to improve the jobs situation, to act on matters of wages and working conditions, to boost French production, to fight the financing battle, and to establish new channels for international cooperation.

It is equally true of our outreach toward young people, whom we must listen to more attentively and come to understand better, or again of our relations with all the organizations that make up the richly textured democratic fabric of association life.

As you can see, we've got a lot to do. And we shall understand the need for it so much better once we have our thinking -- again -- quite clear on this key element in current political reality: the further we go in implementing the policy of change our fellow Frenchmen and Frenchwomen chose in 1981, the sharper the class conflict will grow and, as a consequence, the more need there will be for broad and determined intervention by the people to honor the commitments we have made to the nation, and to crush the obstacles set in our path by the Right and by the bosses.

Every communist effort will thus be aimed at intervention by the people: "Everywhere, reach out to the people!" as the Central Committee's motto has it.

A New Way to Be a Militant

This new way of being a Party activist I've been talking about -- that's just what it is! It means, first of all, being thoroughly familiar with the terrain you are working: begin with the way things really are right now, not with the often outdated notions people may have about them; the way things really are now in the plant or in the neighborhood -- different from the way we may remember them -- which means that now you must be of the people, among them, learning about their needs, their aspirations, their concerns. It means putting out suggestions and proposals that are accessible, understandable, realistic, developed with the people, enriched by their opinions, and thus getting them into the habit of talking about their ideas, about projects, about common goals. It means rallying the people, bringing them together, and using all these new possibilities for fostering and developing action, in forms that will produce tangible results. In a word, it means working to give the working-class movement an awareness of its role as the agent of social change, and doing it with action to fight and beat unemployment, to increase the purchasing power of workers on low and medium incomes, to improve working conditions, to advance toward new social relations by broadening democracy, to impose peace and disarmament.

Obviously, such a concept of political action is going to disconcert our adversaries. It is not motivated by ambition or the lure of profit; it has nothing to do with the mock battles of chieftains or the media manipulations which are the daily bread of political theater. It works far away from the tumult and the shouting; it works where, in the final analysis, things are actually decided: at the heart of the corporation, the neighborhoods, and the towns.

And by working this way, day after day, we shall grow stronger: no doubt about it.

Because, as they look at this political behavior, people will begin to get the hang of it. They will find that, no matter what they have been told or what some of them have believed, the communists are loyal partners in the government and in the majority; that the union of the Left, our work to bring all the working classes together, is still the bedrock of what they do: that the proposals they have espoused in the past for breaking out of the crisis were not frivolous, but serious, and that the goal of their battle today is to help bring about the unity the French voters chose in 1981.

Luckily There's the Communist Party!

A lot of people can say, given this situation, "Luckily, there's the Communist Party!"

And that's the truth: if it weren't there, what could working men and women count on, surrounded as they are by the apostles of resignation? Who would work with them, making full use of their new-won

rights in furtherance of their demands, to create jobs, to oppose all layoffs, all plant closings, to strive for better wages, improved working conditions, for dignity?

If the Communist Party were not there, what could the workers count on, as they face the offensive of the bosses and the Right, to voice their discontent, to say, loud and clear, that we can move forward, we can honor the commitments we made in 1981, and that to do so it is only fitting to make meaningful decisions to encourage production and employment, social progress, and all-out war on the capitalists' outrageous waste of resources?

If the Communist Party were not there, upon whom could the workers count, surrounded as they are by exhortations to cut back on consumption, to show them all the new avenues open to them for prompting adoption of new management practices for corporations and their money, which would help the economy get going again without sacrificing purchasing power?

If the Communist Party were not there, upon whom could the workers count, surrounded by well-trained choirs singing the praises of the status quo, to reveal the real causes of the crisis and to open up the socialist perspective urgently called for by the way things are now in France.

It's Not Enough to Say: "I Voted Left..."

Besides, there's a lot of talk these days about the "record," as we reach the second anniversary of the Left's rise to power. The Right and the big bosses have seized upon it to drench us in their best alarmist commentaries -- but that's not important. We must perforce admit, though, that on the Left, in the world of labor, enthusiasm was deplorably lacking. A lot of the men and women who had pinned their hopes on the political change they voted for in 1981 feel let down today. They are dissatisfied, and many of them are saying so.

That is quite understandable. In 2 years, the Left's government and majority have done a lot of good things -- I'm not going to list them for you -- and, as we have already said, nothing could induce us to underestimate them or to forget them. Yet, at the same time, there are still serious difficulties hanging over us, first among them the capital problem of production and jobs. We cannot just go on repeating ad nauseam, "Our neighbors have more unemployment than we do..." There are more than 2 million people looking for work in France. That is tragic. And it is the more tragic in that everything indicates that we are not moving toward an improvement in the job situation, and that ominous clouds hang over a great many companies, in the private as well as the public sector.

Can we turn the situation around? Yes, we can. I said just now that the depression is not inevitable, that our country has everything it needs to get its economy off to a fresh start. If we were to implement, at all levels, the industrial policy decisions that are clearly mandatory, if we make the public sector industries and the banks play their locomotive role -- which assumes that the heads of these national enterprises will move in that direction and that the workers are really given the means to be full partners in this mighty effort -- if we use all the avenues to new patterns of co-operation; if we do all that, then, yes: it is possible to make some headway in solving the problem.

That is what we communists say. Is this the direction in which the government is turning, with what it calls its "austerity plan"? Anybody can see for himself: we have offered clear-cut, specific proposals for moving in this direction, but the decisions have gone the other way. We have made no secret of our reservations or our criticisms; we are by no means throwing up our hands, but are still calling on the workers to move, to intervene along those five great thrust-lines I mentioned just now. The stubborn fact remains: it is proposals other than the ones we had formulated for encouraging economic recovery, for jobs, and for social justice, that now prevail.

That being the case, the working men and women who share our concern cannot help wondering what went wrong. Let us turn to them resolutely, let us reason together, and perhaps they will understand better that it is not enough to say, come election-time, "I voted Left," forgetting that "Left" covers a lot of territory, and that each party in it has its own analyses and its own proposals.

The Most Important Question Before Any Election

We showed, at the CC meeting, that our Party right now sees signs of an upturn in its influence. There cannot be anything "automatic" about this trend. And the returns from some by-elections last Sunday shed still more light, from this angle, on some behavior we can be pleased with.

For instance, in one place, because the pollsters zero in on the question: "Will the winning Left candidate be the victor in the first round of balloting again?" people decide to answer "Present," as they say. In another place, doubtless because the people are not happy, nobody bothers to go to the polls, and only 30 percent of eligible voters actually cast ballots. In both cases, they neglected to support the Communist Party's proposals, which are in line -- for all that -- with what the people are thinking and, in many cases hoping for themselves...

You'll say: yes, but there are special conditions that apply to these cases... No doubt about it! But you can count on those who do not wish us well: they will always find cogent arguments to put

forward, ranging all the way from parish squabbles to planetary considerations, anything to try to turn people away from voting communist.

Obviously, it is always vital to turn out in force for the second round, and beat the Right. But we must work, whenever any election comes around, in a persevering effort to clear the air of non-issues and distractions and to reveal the real issues every voter ought to ponder before making his choice for the first round: whose analysis of the situation am I going to buy? Whose proposals -- economic, social, democratic -- are likeliest to solve the problems we face? Whose practical action sounds most promising and hence deserves my support? As a consequence, which political party must I support to move forward in the right direction?

There you have the basic questions we must ask ourselves, the great ideas we must spread to get it through people's heads, get them to stop thinking in terms of a "present" ballot as a way to beat the Right, to show them that such a vote dodges the problems of ways and means, of solutions in line with the interests of the voters.

Rebuilding Our Influence: A Must for Moving Ahead

Basically, though, doesn't such behavior on the part of some communist voters stem from the negative attitude the communists themselves once affected vis-à-vis a fundamental issue: the need for using every election to affirm our Party's positions, to make its analyses known, and to summon the people to back its proposals? That overriding imperative is one we have emphatically reasserted, most recently at our 24th congress, in connection with the toughest of all jobs for us: the presidential election. That is history, familiar to us all, and I shall not dwell on it: from now on, there will be a communist candidate in every presidential election. In this context, I should like to make one parenthetical point: if the vote-count procedure, which is extremely unfavorable to us by its very nature, is clear in their minds, how is it that some comrades -- and there are some! -- can still be wondering when this or that by-election comes up, whether or not the Party should bother to field a candidate?

There you have it, comrades: the job we must buckle down to -- I was just talking about elections, but of course it applies across the board, in the work-place and in the neighborhoods. Basically, what we can do now -- and what we are going to be able to do better and better -- is to get people to see the usefulness, the efficacy of what we are doing, as well as the current limitations on our action, against the background of the political balance of power established by the voters of the nation in 1981. And we must not let it be measured by speeches or theoretical fireworks, but by what we do every day, by our experience in the work we have begun to do. That is a certainty, comrades: if we persist, if we improve, if we work for the good of the whole Party and of all its

organizations, a lot of people will come, little by little, to see for themselves the fact they have doubtless lost sight of, and which the anti-communist campaign aims persistently at hiding from them: the workers, the people's parties, and France herself stand in great need of the Communist Party. All that is happening shows it, and a lot of Frenchmen and Frenchwomen can understand that: now that it's happened, it isn't a good thing that the Communist Party has declined in strength. The resurgence of our Party's influence is indeed an essential condition for moving ahead.

Responsibilities Facing Every Communist Leader

These are the new prospects, and hence the new responsibilities incumbent upon us. As the 24th congress stated so forcefully: "This sets every Party organization, every leader, every communist squarely before an exigency unprecedented, at least in scale: to seize the right initiative at the right place, at the right moment, without waiting for instructions 'from above.'"

We need live, dynamic cells that meet regularly, that spread the word about our policies, and that help develop action by the people. That presupposes communists, men and women, who have a firm grip on reality, actively participating in the Party's life and in the implementation of its policies. In a word, it assumes that we attach great importance to democracy within the Party. Working at its development is in fact neither a frill nor an end in itself; rather it is an indispensable tool for enhancing the effectiveness of our action and, at the same time, that of the whole working-class movement.

This is one of the tasks that will be incumbent on you particularly, as the people responsible for the sections. Yours is, in fact, one of the most demanding and difficult tasks in our Party. Because you have to make our policy come alive every day, in contact with the way things really are in the work-place, in the neighborhoods, and around the village pump. Because you are, in a way, at the vital crossroads where general political directives must be translated into practical undertakings, where individual experience comes together to enrich the collective experience and thinking of the Party as a whole.

Our adversaries often project a repulsive image of the Party as a brutal machine that grinds down individual initiative, as an "apparatus" of uniform cogs, issuing orders and exacting obedience. They affect to forget that, if we are communists, it is precisely because we spurn a world where passive obedience and silence in the presence of the mighty are the rule. The truth is that to be a leader at any level -- cell, federation, section, of Central Committee -- means neither issuing nor taking orders. It means paying attention to problems, it means helping others to think and act. And today it means being constantly on guard to see that every cell, every individual communist, is ready and able to live up to his

responsibilities in the new situation we live in, and that every facet of the Party's activity is outward-oriented to respond to the concerns and aspirations of the people.

We must, every man and woman of us, share this deep conviction; for the leadership of a federation or a section, for the secretary of a federation or the secretary of a section, the decisive -- yes, I said "decisive" question -- the one that must dominate and motivate all his thinking as a leader, is that of the health, the life of the Party organization for which he is responsible. How is the Party organized, in which plants, in what neighborhoods, what locality? And just exactly where is it absent or non-existent? How is each cell run? How often do they meet, and what do they talk about at meetings, what do they decide there? What are the Party's real ties with the workers, with the general population? How does it gather accurate information about the problems that arise, about the things that worry people? Does it act on the basis of that information? How does it conduct the political and ideological debate? What specific initiatives does it take to add to its permanent strength, and what results does it get? Where are there isolated communists in this or that plant, in those new housing projects, and what steps are taken to create and nurture new cells everywhere? Yes, comrades: these are decisive questions, absolutely vital questions!

Special Attention to the Party's Health

This becomes even more important in that we must cherish no illusions: for a revolutionary Party like ours, it is upon its own self, upon its own strength that it must rely to push its ideal forward, to expand its influence, to strengthen its organization. The incessant anti-communist drumfire I mentioned, which has recently reached a level of virulence seldom equalled, is there to remind us that when the time comes for the class struggle to grow more bitter, we must expect no truce. We sometimes hear comrades say, "Radio and TV are worse now than under Giscard!" They are no doubt wrong on some points, but they are just as certainly right on a lot more.

Given these conditions, if we are to move ahead there is only one way to do it: work at it ourselves; strengthen the democratic health and appetite for action of each of our organizations, make every communist get the training he needs; improve and diversify our propaganda, and expand the circulation of HUMANITÉ, HUMANITÉ DIMANCHE, and RÉVOLUTION, and of the communist press in general.

About that constant attention you must give the Party's health and well-being: you, section secretaries and -- permit me to address the federation secretaries as well -- don't let yourselves be distracted by the flood, the multiplicity of decisions and directives of all sorts that flow in from "up there." Don't let anybody distract you with a memo from the summit, and, not to put too fine a

point on it, not even one from the Central Committee. No question but that the demands of political life are manifold and sometimes unpredictable; no question but that no front in the struggle must be left unmanned, that all tasks be performed. But take care not to get so swamped by those tasks that you can no longer handle the essential things the Party expects of you. Take care: let's all of us be on our guard against what we must perforce call the bureaucratic tendencies that creep into leadership work habits.

Yes, really, when you see the stacks of minutes, of announcements of initiatives, of proposals for sundry ~~nauses~~ which land first on the federation secretary's desk, and ultimately wind up on the section secretary's table, you say to yourself: that's humanly impossible! These comrades often wake up to a day filled with assignments put together at the summit which they cannot understand, and which they are invariably told are absolutely essential anyway. What time, actually, is left for them to think, to talk things over individually and collectively with their comrades in leadership, to contribute to the development of the Party's mass activities while deciding on suitable initiatives which only they, with their unique knowledge of the terrain, can approve? No question about it: sometimes they have almost none. That is bad for these comrades, and it is equally bad for the Party.

Some Good Reasons for Confidence

And so it was in order to do some thinking about all this that you chose to give up your own holiday time to spend these few days together. I am certain that what you have learned here will help you deepen your thinking about the crucial issues with which you must deal: questions about the way things really are now, about the ramifications of Party strategy, and about the new political approach all these organizations must adopt. The richness of the few days you have spent here together cannot but have inspired each of you to get started in your own sections on the vital task of training all communists, and taking part yourselves in our Party's federal and central training programs.

If I had to sum up in one sentence the sentiments we all share at the conclusion of our labors here, I should have only this to say: we have a totally fascinating job to do. The situation as it stands now gives us some very good reasons for confidence. I said so in my report to the last CC meeting, and I have just demonstrated it: our action is "easier, more effective today than it was yesterday." We really can move ahead.

For my part, I am convinced that the work accomplished during this course will help you achieve the goals you have set yourselves and -- this is all I have to say -- I wish you all success.

LAURENT ON PCF COMPETENCE, TRAINING, ORGANIZATION

Paris CAHIERS DU COMMUNISME in French Jul/Aug 83 pp 40-51

[Lecture by Paul Laurent, member of the PCF political bureau and secretary to the Central Committee: 'The Communist Party We Need now']

[Text] The comrades taking part in this refresher course are heads of the sections which -- if my reckoning is correct -- make up more than half of our Party's membership, and the sections from the biggest corporations in the country. As a consequence, it is not saying too much to claim that you deal directly with all that transpires at a crucial echelon, with the Party as it is, and that you are signally well-placed to tell us just what kind of Party we need today.

Of course, we are not looking for a universal vision, one suited for all times and all places -- although there are some fundamental traits that endure, and I shall have more to say about them -- but rather for a vision that takes full account of the whole complex of things as they are in reality, and of the context within which our Party must act: a subject you have had three days to talk, argue, and exchange views about.

First of all, the profound changes that have occurred in French society; second, a new strategy designed to come to grips with these changes, as it emerged from our last few congresses; and third, the new situation that has developed in France since May of 1981.

It goes without saying that citing these three new aspects of the situation is a long way from a scrutiny of the whole of it. You have also talked about the crisis in French society, about the questionable direction in which the world is moving, and about the balance of political power in France and throughout the world.

Responding to Hard Questions and Real Problems

The web of relationships among all these essential elements in economic, political, social, and cultural evolution is a complex

thing. If we could only say "Aha! Look there! Those are new things! Good! Let's get to work on them!" -- our lives would be a lot simpler. The rub is that this all comes on the heels of a long period during which we paid little attention -- far too little -- to the changes that were taking place in French society, when we were laggard in our response to the crying need for a strategy that would take full cognizance of the uniquely French, day-to-day givens of the battle we were fighting.

With the policy and action designed at our latest congresses, we are no longer concerned with an approach that would merely be an extension of what we had already done. To put it briefly, we have made the transition from a place in the opposition, where the strategy we relied on was already obsolete, to a position in which we are direct participants in the shaping of national affairs, involved in the implementation of a new strategy, a new concept of the democratic advance to a purely French version of socialism. In a word, the problem is not merely one of sizing up the new aspects of our policy. It is -- and I think you have all shared this feeling -- a problem of adaptation for all of us, a problem I would call tantamount to reconversion; a healthy, sound reconversion, which will enable us to bring much more pressure to bear much more effectively on the turn of events.

Of course you have already had time for a thorough examination of all this implies for the Party's political activity, and for the orientation we must adopt. I should like to show you, though, that the consequences are no less traumatic in the definition of what the Communist Party must be today, and in its organizational concepts. Briefly, what I can tell you is that the Party is not "ready-made" for all-occasion wear, in any kind of situation. It must be "made to order" all over again at any and all junctures, particularly at the one we are going through right now.

The 24th congress blazoned the issue of a new political approach, of a new kind of mass action, in letters of fire for us to read. I remember a key passage in the resolution on this issue: "The first requirement, the one that governs all the rest, is to mount this activity on the ground and in life, at the place and at the moment when the basic issues confront the people, in the nitty-gritty of their troubles, their demands, and their struggles. It means sitting down with them and hammering out goals that will get things moving and that are realistically feasible, leading them into action in ways that will take them where they want to go. It means starting to change the way things are -- starting today: that is the master password."

And the resolution goes on: "We must be part of all the workers' struggles so as to win all the advantages, all the rights, all the liberties, all the high ground we can. And in the course of that combat, we must make the most of every victory without failing to mark its limits, in order to expand the people's understanding of

understanding of the basic causes and possible solutions for the crisis, of the class stakes in the fight to get out of it, so as to use their experience to enhance their determination to make the more far-reaching changes that will commit this nation deeply to the path of renewal."

After laying down these broad guidelines, the congress and the Central Committee sessions that ensued did not stop to consider the question of "What is to be done?" but went beyond that to ask: "with whom shall we do what is to be done?" Where, and how, are we to do it? That is what we are concerned with right now at every Party meeting. The idea is to adapt generic responses to the concrete developments in the political situation, and to real problems.

It is political events that determine the place of such action in the general context of communist activities. Here is an example: the company that can, or could, engage in large-scale production of a commodity that had never been produced in France: that poses a lot of problems to the company's management, to those who work for it, to the city where the company has its plant, maybe even to the region, and to present or potential customers. In other words, for all these people who represent a specific social milieu, a particular slice of the French population, this is a major problem. I say this because broad guidelines are one thing, but the events that make them meaningful in people's minds are quite another, something that, each time, calls for discussion, for hard thinking, and initiative.

In short, this is what the 24th congress resolution said: "A new kind of mass action, translating a strategy of revolutionary scope into the terms of everyday life: that is the whole answer to the problems we face. But this response would be nothing without a revolutionary party capable of pioneering the way to worker-managed socialism."

That particular statement may be dismissed as a truism because, after all, the need for a revolutionary Party hardly comes as a revelation... It is the very awareness of that need that has made us all members, militant members of the French Communist Party, a Party that is organized around a policy rooted as deeply as possible in a realistic vision of social development, and grounded in scientific socialism. As a consequence, the issues involved in it -- the political and ideological training of Party members, its ties to the masses, its principles of organization -- are not all that new, either. And so, once again, it is wiser not to dismiss these problems as mere routine, and -- I repeat -- to consider them, to look at them in the context of present-day France, in connection with the policy lines laid down by the 24th congress.

This is why I should like now to dwell on four main questions which will, in my opinion, enable us to distinguish clearly the problems facing today's Communist Party. First, the question of the training and political and ideological levels of communists. Second, the question of the PCF's democratic life. Third, the problem, of a mass Party bound to the masses. Fourth, the question of the cell, a vital element of the Party, along with the problem of help to the cells and to the members. Don't look for any formal priorities in this order: it's just a series like any other. We might just as well have begun with the mass Party and ended with democratic life. I say this so as not to set up any erroneous hierarchy among these questions.

Political and Ideological Training for Communists

Let's look first at the matter of individual and collective political and ideological training for communists. You've all heard it; for all of us today it is the capacity for initiative in each of us, in Party members, in Party organizations, in every field, at every level, on the most disparate issues, great and small, that is the key factor in our advance.

This is quite different from the problems we were concerned with in the days of the Common Program. We have probably said this repeatedly here: during that entire period, the response to the problems that arose was directly subordinate to the victory of the signatory parties to the Common Program in the elections. Today, the action has shifted to the ground of many daily initiatives and actions, each opening the way to new advances, which, in turn, become stepping-stones for the future.

Our Strategy Implies Enhanced Knowledge

This means, on a large scale for all communists, being informed, being aware of current events, discussing those events and the situations surrounding them, and discussion of the Party's policy. That implies, to begin with, on the part of the leadership -- yours in particular, but that of all other groups as well -- motivation for personal effort in study and in reflection on the part of every communist. Secondly, it implies participation -- that is obvious -- in Party life, in exchanges and discussions among communists. And thirdly, it calls for heightened attention to the various avenues of training, of ratiocination, of research. In short, an improvement in our intellectual, personal, and collective activity.

All of this becomes the more needful in that the field of intervention open to the Communist Party now is far more vast, in that there is need for deeper and broader collective mastery of the issues, because -- I should say -- we are involved in everything, in an active way, so as to have an impact on events, including issues that are a bit alien to what we have become accustomed to thinking

of as the everyday activities of communists --- you have talked a great deal about economic management, for instance.

And this is not just because we are now part of the government! It has been said, and rightly: "We are in the government, and so we must behave like a party in government." More fundamentally, though, it is our strategy that calls for a higher level of competence. We must participate in elaborating the responses to the economic, social, and political problems, and we must do so actively and precisely. That does not mean going about it like nit-picking managers, but, quite the contrary, approaching it on the level of the grand ideas that enable us to descry the essential solutions to each specific question. This means that we need communists who are both curious and knowledgeable. This is what makes the question of personal and collective political and ideological training an essential aspect in enhancing the Party's inner life.

Constantly Improving the Party's Democratic Life...

Improving the Party's democratic life means that it is at the cell and sector levels that the true encounter, the true dialogue among communists occurs, in the diversity of their relationships, their occupational and social situations, and their capacities for intervention. All this clearly counts when new problems, a great many of them, arise; when our thirst for responsibility grows, when the question of democracy lies at the heart of our policy.

What sets us apart from the other parties in the area of democratic life is the fact that we work incessantly at getting all communists to participate in the elaboration and implementation of our policy. For us, democratic life is, first of all, the life of the Party organizations; it means getting all communists to take a creative and critical part in them. To abandon some communists is to abandon a measure of democracy.

...With the Participation of the Greatest Possible Number of Communists....

Let me say right off that these requirements for creative and critical participation by all enhances our specific modus operandi, which is known as democratic centralism, and which, as you know, is distinguished by three features: free and full discussion by all communists, decisions by majority, and application of those decisions by all, which does not exclude the right to entertain a point of view differing from that of the majority.

To say this, however, to repeat these lofty principles of democratic centralism, is not enough unless we have a full and ambitious concept of their meaning. There can be, I repeat, none of what we call full and free discussion without regular meetings, carefully prepared. There can be no genuine majority decisions without an

ongoing effort to keep in touch with all members. There can be no application of decisions by all without some thought as to ways of associating all communists with the implementation of the decisions we reach. I ask you: what resemblance to democratic centralism can there be in a cell that meets seldom or not at all, one that voluntarily drops what it calls its inactive members? There can be no good discussion when people don't come to meetings, or when only an exiguous minority regularly shows up. There can be no majority decisions when the majority has no voice in them; and, clearly, there is even less participation by all. The idea of democratic centralism is inseparable from the ongoing effort to bring everybody into the Party's thinking and its decision-making process.

As to the quality of debate on ideas, which goes hand in hand with the idea of democratic centralism, it is linked as well with an understanding of the complexity of situations -- and with patience. Who is right and who is wrong? It's not always that simple.

If there is to be debate, there must be no dramatizing of every little difference or disagreement that crops up on this or that decision. We read in the resolution of the 24th congress in connection with the Party: "Unity is not uniformity, any more than diversity is division."

That is profoundly true. There may be differences of opinion over a specific issue, and agreement to act in the end without there being total and perfect harmony at all times and on every score. To do otherwise would be to put a chill on the development of discussion and debate.

This also ties the question of democracy in with the expanded role of the election of leadership, and of the leadership groups themselves. The development of real democratic life is a factor in training, in member commitment, and hence ultimately in the Party's reach, in its capacity and its determination to make our policies known, to organize the action. That is our strength. In other words, we must not, as some may think and as we are all sometimes tempted to do, take the easy way out with a handful of true believers. We must work at getting people to come to discussions, at training and preparing the great mass of communists for action and for militant effort. If, to take just one example: one essential aspect of the political struggle today is an active, mass Communist Party facing the news media. If that happens, we have every chance -- even a better chance than any of the others, because the balance will swing in our direction if the Party has a political life of its own and the militant capacity that grows out of it.

For that matter, if you look back a way you will note that everything we are doing to improve the Party's statutes runs in the direction of broadening the avenues of access to democratic life. For example, we have placed the rights of members on an equal plane

with their duties, because there can be no duties where there are no rights, where there is no participation in decision-making, where there is not an informed and educated membership. We have expanded the opportunities for public debate on major issues, even apart from the congress season, so as to be able to get the word out to everybody. We have set up a national council, which is a kind of expanded Central Committee, to provide for broader and more substantial, more stimulating reflection. We have upgraded the scope of our congresses as democratic events vital to the Party's life. So you see, the way to help with the personal and collective effort at training and reflection, beyond the specific education and training activities, lies in the development of operative democracy within the Party.

A Mass Party, Bound to the Masses: What Does That Mean?

A mass Party, bound to the masses, is the third matter I want to deal with. As a matter of fact, everything that has been said here has meaning only if it is associated with the notion of the "mass Party, bound to the masses, first of all in the work-place."

You can see immediately how limited our high political and ideological level and our great capacity for initiative would be, were we but a handful.

A Rule of Conduct

The simple idea is that without the active presence of the Communist Party, we would have what would amount, sooner or later, to the untrammelled sway of bourgeois ideas and policies.

When we talk of the PCF's active presence, of course, even in the remotest hamlet in France, where there is no Party cell, it is nevertheless true that we find a certain degree of Party influence. From time to time we see a Party leader on television; from time to time some départemental or regional event reaches even into that village. Even so, the other ideas hold almost uncontested sway... almost! You all know some comrades who, when we insist on the need for organized Party forces (you are in a good position to know some of them, because you have to do a lot of insisting on that score) rebut our argument by citing election returns from a place where there is no Party presence, but which were no worse than those from another district where the Party exists as an organized force. That, however, is a very superficial argument. For one thing, it might have been thanks to active communist neighbors that we held the line in that particular spot. For another, it might have been due to earlier influence that has since waned, but that cannot last. Of course, in a country like France where people move about a lot -- even communists move about quite a lot, just like everybody else -- everybody comes into contact with us more or less frequently; but such encounters occur at levels so different, and depend so heavily

on places where there is a real and active Party presence, that we really must totally discard the idea that we could get along without a mass Party. We must be present everywhere, or as nearly as possible, and we must be strong everywhere. That is our rule of conduct. And, from one point of view, these are the very questions that come up in connection with the Party's presence in the work-place. When we talk of the Party's presence in the work-place as it really is, we mean that there is a tendency to have a very active presence in certain areas of the work-place and none at all in others. And thus we must keep asking ourselves what must be done to broaden the Party's base. Not only in all areas of every plant, but in every neighborhood and in every commune.

More Communists All the Time

Here is another question you have certainly run into: there is supposed to be a certain objective limit to the number of communists. Actually, the only limit to their numbers is the extent of the encounter between the Party and the men and women who approve of it, and who are aware of the fact that they must work to make it win. And that number is, to all intents and purposes, limitless.

Our concept of the avant-garde is simple: it is made up of men and women who are ready and willing to organize for the struggle around the Party's policy. There is a place for all of them in the Communist Party, and we must work to bring them into it, because not all of them, by any means, are in it now.

And now one last question: When we talk of our bonds, our ties with the masses, we are obviously talking about presence everywhere, about a broad vision of our potential for growth: but that cannot be confined to the Party/masses relationship -- if I may call it that -- alone. The dawning awareness of the people's interests, of the need to organize, comes about through the simplest of channels, the most important of which is the labor movement, but there are many more that emerge as time goes by: and I am talking now about the association movement. As a consequence, a mass Party bound to the masses is inconceivable if communists are not full participants in the association life. That is where the apprenticeship in organizing and in the struggle begins, where the most diverse aspirations of the masses are most directly expressed.

The Cell: A Vital Element

In all of communist activity -- and this brings me to my fourth point -- the cell is the vital element. And helping the cells, and their members, is the principal duty of the leadership.

After the 24th congress, the Saclas meeting of the Central Committee concentrated its attention on the cell as the critical venue for Party activity, for mobilizing all communists, for strengthening the Party. There, when all is said and done, is where the real level of understanding and implementation of Party policy is decided.

All the activity of the leadership bodies, acting since the last CC meeting on the motto: "Reach Out to the People," must have as its principal weapon the aggressive activity of the cells and their growth. This becomes particularly clear if we transpose this approach to the major decisions for action taken by the Central Committee. There are roughly three of them: first, development of specific practical action along the great lines of thrust mapped out by the CC for fighting unemployment, for economic recovery, for improved purchasing power, and for better working conditions; second, a sweeping campaign of discussion meetings where we can talk to the people about policy; and third, active participation by communists in the 19 June victory.

Prime Concern for Leadership: The Cells

As we run down the list of goals, we see that the cell holds a pre-eminent place on that list. Obvious though that may be, however, the fact is that it calls for continuous, pitiless scrutiny at the Central Committee level, federation by federation and section by section, because, just among ourselves, it happens that when such scrutiny is performed, it is not always perceived as such. By way of demonstration, I should like to compare the Saclas CC guidelines with the turn things have taken in the year since they were laid down.

A year ago, we found that the cells had somehow escaped the attention of the Party leadership. That year 80 percent of the cells held public rallies. True, that's a lot: but it still leaves 20 percent that held none. Another example: some cells have not held a single meeting since the municipal elections. And so there are some things that need to be said to communists, even if they amount to no more than the truth about the outcome. The real problem is that those who have not attended any meetings may think that the Party actually lost in the municipal elections; that is not the case among those who discussed the returns at cell meetings, and scrutinized them at their leisure. One final fact: there are members who, as of Mayday this year, still did not have their 1983 Party cards. How can that be? We have to understand why we have such a hard time correcting this kind of inadequacy.

Each of us can say this, too: the more important and urgent a particular action is, the stronger our tendency to neglect the less active and smaller cells. For instance, we often get this kind of comment just before a major event like a municipal election or a federation festival: "We'll worry about the cells that are in trouble when this is over." But the point I'm making is that it is precise the bustling time of preparations for such events that is the very best time to get a Party organization moving, to give it something to chew on besides abstract volunteer work, something rooted in real politics, something with a clear-cut political goal attached.

Along this same line of reasoning, all too often, the weaker the cell is the less help and attention it gets from the leadership. Obviously, we are pretty much like everybody else in this world: it's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease, and when we have cells that are thriving, we tend to drop in on those cells more often. Even so, it must be said that communist activity, in the sense of its expansion, of the power it exerts over public opinion, must always be motivated by a determination to press on, to dig deeper, to reach farther. For example, we have too few really systematic projects, too few Party organizations being emplaced in new plants, in sectors of big business, and in communes these days.

One more observation, which probably won't concern more than a few of the comrades here. It's about an element in reflection. The Saclas CC meeting had recommended that we do some thinking about the structure of Party sections so as to provide them with greater leadership capacity for dealing with the cells. We had conducted a study which showed that there were a lot of Party sections with fewer than 50 members. Clearly, except for a few plant sections, these are not real sections: they are the equivalent of cells -- or maybe two or three cells. Well, despite our observations, things are not moving very fast in the direction of bigger sections, or of real ability to assist the cells. In short, we must steep ourselves some more in thinking about the pivotal character of the cells' activity, about getting help to each of them so that they are truly at the heart of the leadership groups' concerns. We have to face up to it: it is only along this essential route that the Party's policy can, as the Central Committee puts it, reach out to the people.

The Importance of Leaders

Just a word more about this question.

When we were wishing we had more real sections, we were not aiming at making one echelon of the Party work better as such. Our aim was, and is, to see to it that this organism gives the cells more and better service. There are some comrades who have recentralized some sections in some communes. We have a question for them: are you absolutely sure that all the members of the old section committees, who are fewer in number now because there is only one section committee per town, have really been oriented toward the cells, where they can do their jobs more directly? And above all (I say this because I feel it concerns the section secretaries) we need great daring, and more of it, to give the cells the leadership they need. Audacity is called for, of course, when it comes to giving new cadres a taste of these responsibilities early in their careers, but we also need audacity (here I am only reminding you of the Saclas CC's view) to assign such tasks to experienced cadres. Here is another idea that needs to be fleshed out: no Party leader, no matter how high an echelon he occupies or what his responsibilities may be, can consider himself exempt from direct responsibility to the

cells, beginning with his own. And yet we have leaders who lose not one wink of sleep when their own section's activity slumps. You have all probably heard this story, but, funny as it is, it has a sting to it: Somebody asks a comrade with a pretty heavy load of responsibility to lend a hand to a cell. He answers, "All right, but is it working?" The right answer would have been, "Sure, but if it isn't working, let's all try to get it working again."

You can play a major role in getting the leadership to shift its orientation more toward the cells.

Such a question ought by rights to be asked in connection with politics, with political events. The right approach is not: I'll groom a cell now, and that way it will be ready for the next major political event, the local festival we're planning... No! It's the other way 'round! It is in the preparations for such an event, or because of such an event, national or départemental, and to further the political action with which it is tied in, that the ailing cell must be helped and given its chance at full recovery in the excitement of the political battle.

Activists Who Know What They're Doing

In order to save this lecture from looking like a report, I must conclude with a few bits of advice about work that seems to me essential in matters of organization these days.

1. The Party's ongoing and practical concern with recruitment, with the creation of new cells, with the renewal of Party cards by every member.

For some 30 years now we have been witness to a considerable rise in urbanization, particularly of big developments and the emergence of a great many big industrial, commercial, and office concentrations, often in new regions and in new sectors. Scientific and technical advances have brought with them some profound alterations in the structure of the working class. Technicians hold a lot more jobs now, the number of women in the work force has grown, as has the importance of the tertiary sector and some new branches of industry; the growth of secondary education and university study has created very large groups of career candidates; unemployment has unfortunately become a mass phenomenon, and millions of emigrants have come to settle in France.

Of course, the Party has sent down new roots and the activity of its cells has, to a degree, kept pace with these developments. Even so, there is unquestionably a wide gap between the scope of these new issues that arise at the organizational level because of the changes that have taken place and the re-thinking they require as to initiatives and innovations at the recruiting level. That is an

initial given. Hence the concern with bringing the Party -- if I dare put it this way -- its organization, and its deployment into line with France as it is today. And you are all aware that this calls for a new look. That implies returning aggressively, with all the new edge we now hold, to a new examination of our deployment in the work-places, beginning with the public-sector cells, old and new.

Things are different today in the nationalized sector. There are wage-earners' representatives sitting on boards of directors. We have new rights. We have to approach the whole job from a new angle. On the other hand -- to cite another example -- for some time now we have tended to look at shop technicians in a way that generally led us to leave them out of our priorities in the plant. We need to do some re-thinking on that score, too.

2. The bedrock of our effort at recruiting and at building the Party lies in the people who vote for us.

Madeleine Vincent explained that not long ago at a Central Committee meeting. Consider for a moment our political and ideological roots among the 5 million people who have always, rain or shine, voted for the Communist Party. How can anyone believe that among those 5 million there are only 700,000 who might possibly make communists? These people are this country's avant-garde. They are an enormous source of potential strength. And then, we have to take a good look at the people we are recruiting. Here and there some sloppiness has crept into our effort to make sure every Party member has his card. We must not allow sloppiness, and we must not permit ourselves to be guilty of it at any level.

There you have it, comrades: that's what I wanted to say to you, Your whole refresher course will show, once again, that our battle is the rejection of any pre-ordained sequence of events. It is working to give the protagonists in the struggle a deep awareness of their role in making things move in the right direction. And our Party, its organized strength, its ability to take the initiative, that of its organizations and its members, its influence in the working-class movement -- all this adds up to essential, irreplaceable strength in this struggle toward a kind of socialism fully consonant with the needs of our people, and in its ultimate victory. And so, when we talk about organizing work, what we are really talking about is the job of moving the Party forward so it can more fully play this role. That is the essential key to our progress.

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GREMETZ ON NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Paris CAHIERS DU COMMUNISME in French Jul/Aug 83 pp 52-65

[Lecture by Maxine Gremetz, member of the PCF's political bureau and secretary of its Central Committee: "The Moving World"]

[Text] In a time when international relations have reached a state of extreme density, the answer to the question of which way the world is moving becomes, in a country like ours, a considerable ideological edge. The very people who so relish accusing communists of Manichaeism, not to mention antediluvianism when we talk about the class struggle are engaged in a war of ideas designed to thrust upon our people their vision of a dangerous, despairing world headed hell-bent toward disaster.

These people prate to us about a world bi-polarized by two opposing blocs, or sometimes a multi-polar world, pulled and hauled hither and yon by a multiplicity of conflicting demands, and in imminent danger of blundering into apocalypse! What are we to make of all this?

I want to say right now that our Party will not stoop to such oversimplification of the international situation.

Far from taking a rigid, dogmatic view, we do our level best, on the contrary, to analyze the true state of international affairs in all their restlessly shifting complexity. Once you set out to do that, you can no longer be content with looking -- if I may say so -- at the surface of things. You have to look past the surface, and see what is moving deep down.

International Realities: A Class Confrontation
Scaled to the Issues of our Time

What is, at bottom, the issue that dominates the concerns of billions of people today? It is a strong and growing aspiration, expressed under diverse conditions and in a multiplicity of forms, to have done with lives of suffering and poverty, of injustice, of oppression, and of exploitation.

That there should be, as the 20th century draws to a close, as we behold the tremendous accumulation of new knowledge, billions of people still suffering hunger and poverty, illiteracy, endemic disease, colonialism or neo-colonialism -- is perceived as an intolerable thing. That, even as we are witness to an unprecedented burst of brilliance in the sciences and technology, hundreds of millions of men and women should be oppressed, their toil exploited, bereft of jobs or training, scorned and persecuted -- becomes increasingly intolerable and unacceptable. That fabulous sums of money are swallowed up in an arms race that may well destroy all human life, while the real need is so urgent, is something already perceived as an obscene absurdity to which we must put an end. As nations are born and assert their rights, the behavior of the forces of big capital who oppose that flowering oppress the new-born nations, trample on their sovereignty, and meddle shamelessly in their affairs is condemned on every side. And this revulsion finds its practical expression in varying degrees of sharpness, in rejection of economic and political serfdom, in the awakening and stirring of peoples to win the right to live free, in dignity and in the peace and security of a bright tomorrow for all.

That is what moves us to speak of a real change in the human race in our time. Wherever you look, we are indeed in the midst of a universal movement that impels men and women to take their relations with nature, with one another, into their own two hands to achieve their national, social, and human liberation.

Committed to this course, they are confronted by powerful forces opposed to this trend toward a new civilization. The reason for that opposition is that the birth of a new civilization means, in fact, that for the old order that held full sway only a few decades ago, subjecting all else to the criterion of capitalist financial profit for the benefit of a handful of multinational corporations, death cannot be far behind.

This domination, this system leads by its very nature to a worsening of the conditions under which those it exploits must live out their lives. Its fruits can be seen in the hundreds of millions of men and women who are hungry, whose lives are blighted by underdevelopment. We can see it in the living conditions of almost a third of the population of the United States living below the poverty threshold, or in the numbers of the jobless in developed capitalist countries.

Solid Base for Operations

This movement of whole peoples, so marvelously diverse in its forms and in the sources of its strength, is spreading the faster because they have already won some solid bases for operations which open up promising prospects for their battle.

This is true for the peoples of more than 90 countries that, since 1945, have freed themselves from colonialism after what was often a long struggle, and a costly one in terms of human lives as well. And this is still going on right now, since peoples like those of Namibia, the Western Sahara, El Salvador, or the Palestinians -- to name only a few -- still see their rights as nations scorned.

Even those that have won their independence as nations have yet to achieve their economic and social emancipation, the freedom to build the society of their choice.

All of this was voiced recently by Mrs Indira Ghandi, newly elected president of the Non-Aligned movement made up of more than 100 states of differing political orientations, in these terms: "Thirty-five years ago, most of our people were bowed beneath a foreign yoke, without the right to a voice in their own affairs. With emancipation from colonialism and access to independence, the concept of non-alignment was born. And anti-imperialism still colors our attitudes." She went on to say: "The non-aligned nations determined to band together, not to constitute another bloc, but to become, as a moral and political movement, spokesman for the millions of human beings who are still exploited."

That, I think, is a good picture of just what is stirring amid -- I repeat -- many and diverse conditions.

In the advanced capitalist countries, millions of men and women are finding it just as hard to survive as they endure unemployment and exploitation. Their struggles did not begin yesterday; but with the deepening of the crisis in the capitalist system, their aspirations toward a better life have grown greater, even though the political terms in which they are couched may differ. This is particularly striking in Europe.

Europe's people have done away with the last of the dictatorships, with the sole exception of Turkey.

Aspirations to the dignity of nationhood are rising strongly in Ireland.

Under different conditions, France and Greece are both involved in a process of major political and social change.

At times, the depth of the crisis besetting the European capitalist countries might give one the impression that the working-class movement is less vigorous here than elsewhere. The truth is that some very strong aspirations are finding voice; everywhere we see social and democratic struggles under way, and they all start from the way things are in the particular places where they are.

For example, the mobilization for peace and disarmament is a particularly enlightening factor, with the large place young people

occupy in it. Hardly a day goes by that HUMANITÉ doesn't carry a story on the latest working-class action on this issue. Need I remind you of the 750,000 people in the Easter marches in the FRG, the women's demonstrations in Britain, the activities in Italy, in The Netherlands, in the Scandinavian countries, in the DRG, in Greece, in Portugal, in the United States, in Japan and Austria and Australia? There you have convergence of action on a truly global scale, and one of enormous import, to which I shall return.

But, just to stay in Europe, there are some lessons to be learned from the recent political elections. The changes in government teams, while from France they may bear a strong resemblance to "much ado about nothing," are really significant of a determination to change the way things are which, according to the strength of the revolutionary movement and the positions of other political forces, turn out to be something else again. For example: some socialist or social-democratic parties were replaced in power by conservative parties: we saw this most recently in Great Britain and in the Federal Republic of Germany, and again in developments in Austria. Elsewhere, though, these parties rose to power, or gained strength.

The differing and contrasting behavior of these parties on the issue of alliance with the communists -- now in effect in France, rejected elsewhere -- but also on a number of practical issues, domestic and foreign, are the reflection of contradictions within the current movements.

So we can't really say that there has been a turn to the Right or to the Left in Western Europe: there is a questioning everywhere, although the clear awareness needed to get there is very spotty, as to the way out of the problems which the capitalist state only exacerbates. And there are no grounds, either, in view of the very disparate results chalked up in the various communist parties (think of Spain, of Portugal, of Greece ...) to grant particular credence to those who rushed into print with predictions of an imminent "historic decline" of the communist parties, which they described as "inevitable."

To all this we may add the many social and labor movements, the strong actions mounted against all stripes of racism, the vital women's movement for their full liberation, which emerges as one of the prime factors for change in social relations and attitudes. All this clearly shows that we are part and parcel of a very profound movement that is everywhere carrying men and women to demand a world of justice and of social progress, of democracy and of peace.

Many Socialist Countries

I have already said that this vast movement has already got some results, has won itself strong bases from which to move in strength.

One of these, and a decisive one for this particular battle, is the existence of a good many socialist countries. By that I mean countries which, having put a stop to the exploitation of man by man, are already engaged in building societies that rest on new foundations.

That process began in 1917, with the October Revolution in Russia. An event of vast historical significance, since it put an end to the dominion thitherto held over the world by unchallenged imperialism, and thereby ushered in a new epoch in human history. Since 1945, a good many more countries have chosen this road in their turn, thus helping turn the world upside-down. I shall have more to say about a possible assessment of current trends in these societies later on.

Just now, though, I want to dwell on just one aspect: what role have the transformations undertaken by these peoples played, and what role is theirs now, as models for the world's other peoples?

First, the tangible demonstrations made, in the real world, in vastly differing forms and conditions, that the great issues I cited earlier -- hunger, education, jobs, etc. -- can indeed be solved once you change your thinking and once you set at the core of your society's development the quest for ways to satisfy those human needs, with the active participation of all concerned.

That done, the fight to change society has no one "model" to be slavishly copied -- we must toss that idea out with the trash -- but a rich and various body of experience that kindles the hopes and strengthens the wills of those in the struggle.

By their existence and by their achievements, the socialist societies have diminished imperialism's sphere of influence, and in so doing have exacerbated its inherent contradictions; there are more than a billion and a half men and women involved in the human adventure of building socialism.

The economic weight of the socialist countries, while not yet dominant, plays a role in the development of new production relationships, and their military might helps keep at a respectful distance the forces determined by fair means or foul to impose their own economic and political domination.

The influence of the socialist countries is also considerable at the political level: their initiative in international venues, their proposals and action on behalf of détente and disarmament count for a very great deal in continuing coexistence and in keeping the peace. In short, we have the socialist countries and their political and military influence to thank, to a large degree, for the fact that we have managed to avoid another world war for 38 years.

Lastly, we must assign its full value to the support provided by these countries to the struggles of other peoples striving for their own national liberation, their economic independence, and their social emancipation.

Don't all these factors move us to agree that "the socialist contribution to human progress is incontestable," as the resolution of the PCF's 24th congress put it? I think I can say it does.

Now that I have tried to paint the picture for you, and I hope it is as well fleshed-out as I can make it -- what can I tell you about the balance of power?

Acute Class Confrontation

Clearly, we are at the core of a very acute class confrontation. The fact is that there are forces in this world which are opposed to this development. A cursory look at history confirms that every advance has come as the result of a no-quarter struggle to make the forces of big capital let go.

That fight has made such victories possible that imperialism is no longer in a position to do just as it pleases.

Two events that took place during the Seventies helped signally to hasten this development. One was the Vietnamese people's victory, gained after decades of struggle, with the support of revolutionary and progressive forces the world over against the most powerful of the imperialist forces. The Helsinki Agreements were the second watershed event, recognizing the new frontiers that had emerged from World War II and, so to speak, codifying peaceful coexistence. Relations between nations with differing social systems are also a particularly clear illustration of the way the world turns these days.

Peaceful coexistence was thrust upon imperialism which, facing an unprecedented crisis, can no longer go on solving all its problems by declaring war; isn't that quite a feat, and one that works in favor of the peoples' struggle? Peaceful coexistence, of course, does not signify, as big capital expected it would, a continuance for the social and political status quo.

What has happened since these events took place? After a time when there were some reverses (need I remind you, perhaps, of Chile?), we might have got the (mistaken) impression that there was an irresistible, triumphal advance under way toward a world of peace and progress, there have been times when the international situation showed signs of serious tensions. Can anyone be surprised that, in the face of this turn of events so favorable to the forces of progress, the imperialists were not content to grind their teeth in baffled rage, unable to act or to react? They'll fight, with all the means at their disposal, to slow this turn of events, if

not actually turn it around. That is the fundamental reason for their aggressiveness in a world that is rapidly slipping from their grasp. This is why we believe even now that the simultaneous -- not to say converging -- action of those very disparate factors I mentioned earlier "has altered the balance of power to the point that imperialism can no longer do just as it pleases."

We said it again at last October's Central Committee session, just after those painful events in Lebanon. We feel, in fact, that the aggressiveness exhibited these days by imperialism stems from its fear in the face of advancing socialism and of the rising tide of social and political struggles on every continent. And, without underestimating the element of danger, we see no sign of strength in that aggressiveness.

Each of you had to be aware of Georges Marchais' lecture on "The French Challenge to the Crisis," delivered at the Party's central school in Paris. So I shall not dwell at any length on the food for thought he spread before us there. I should like merely to underscore the fact that our analysis of the way things stand now in international relations is being matched right now by the imperialist leaders. They cannot permit their economic and political domination to be so rudely challenged. That is why they have been so busy these past few years at mounting what we have dubbed the imperialist counteroffensive. The term conveys precisely what all this is about: it is a backlash, after taking a number of stinging rebuffs. To maintain its domination, or, if you like, in an attempt to recapture the ground it has lost, it must counterattack on all fronts. And of course it is the strongest of the imperialists, the Americans, who are directing the whole campaign, with the clearly stated intention of imposing their views on one and all, including their allies. This had already begun under Carter, with very uneven results: it was during his "reign" that the Iranian people drove out the shah, that Zimbabwe won its independence, that the Nicaraguan revolution was victorious... All this, though, takes on a new dimension with Ronald Reagan: that of a deliberate policy of stepped-up confrontation. The crisis has reached the point where the gloves are off. United States Vice President George Bush said, just a few months ago: "We have listened to a goodly number of protests from our European allies; sorry about that, but the United States is the leader of the free world, and under this administration we are going to start acting like it again." The goal, clearly, is to win back supremacy in all areas, including the military, so as to halt the growth of the vast people's liberation movement, to lash out against it. But -- and this is precisely where the crisis for domination hits -- every new attempt to impose it is the source of new problems.

The Crisis in Imperialist Domination

Look at Central America. The fighting is fierce. Mr Reagan, openly supporting the aggression of Somosista and Honduran mercenaries

against Nicaragua, now dares to challenge the legitimacy of Nicaragua's government. Declaring that Central America is "the United States' back yard," he is blocking any negotiated settlement in El Salvador, where the war continues to claim dozens of lives every day. As a consequence, tensions are running high in the region; yet, at the same time, this policy is arousing increasing opposition throughout Latin America, where the authority of the United States is hotly challenged (we have seen this ever since the Falklands war) even, under the thrust from the people, by governments which are a far cry from progressive.

So we see countries like Panama, Colombia, and Mexico calling for a political solution to the conflicts and for peace in the region.

And in the United States itself, the fear of another Vietnam, according to the opinion polls, leads a majority of Americans to disapprove of American intervention in Central America. This sentiment was reflected again in the recent vote in the House of Representatives approving a bill that bans funds for military or paramilitary operations against the Nicaraguan government.

Let's take another example, a very recent one: the Middle East. Here again, the fighting is fierce, and the Palestinian and Lebanese people have borne the brunt of it. Still nothing is settled, and Israel's aggression has isolated that country internationally as it has never been before. President Reagan's positions have coalesced around the Fez plan, which faces the international community with its responsibilities. Never has the Palestinian people's cause enjoyed such international support, and never has the political authority of the PLO been so great.

Now let's look at Southern Africa. The United States is bringing all the pressure it can command to bear on blocking the access of Namibia, the last colonial territory in Africa, to independence. A United Nations conference met recently in Paris, where both South Africa and the United States were unanimously condemned as the international community refused to link Namibia's independence with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from recently liberated Angola.

Of course the United States tries everywhere to act with the support or thorough the good offices of such regional police forces as Israel, South Africa (which I just mentioned), or Thailand in Asia and Honduras in Central America. And yet, bitter though the fighting may be, how can anyone fail to see the potential it conceals? The aroused peoples in arms are not throwing up their hands, and the aggressors' troubles multiply.

We might make the same observation in connection with relations among the developed capitalist countries. For example, between Europe and the United States, or even inside Europe itself.

Here again we see a clearly stated determination to export the American crisis. But the Reagan "recipe" -- as a recent HUMANITÉ editorial showed -- has served up a record tide of unemployment in the United States (12 million jobless) and in the European countries; only France is coping with a special situation of its own making.

Inevitably this is heightening the friction between the United States and its partners. You can see it in the current soaring rate of the dollar, and in its disastrous effect on European economies. Reagan's appeal to cut back cooperation with the socialist countries falls on increasingly deaf ears, because the facts of economic life speak far more cogently. The American experts, having learned a lesson or two from the two failed embargos against the USSR, have reached the conclusion that not only did the embargos not hurt the Soviet Union: they did far more damage to the United States.

In the same way, as the crisis worsens, we see the mounting difficulties involved in pushing European supranational integration any further. The political will to do so has been affirmed, notably by Mrs Thatcher and Mr Kohl, but the problems besetting the farmers are an indication of how difficult it is getting to override the real interests of each country's people.

Again, how could we not see the changes under way here at home, and to some degree in Greece, further exacerbating the contradictions? We see it, for instance, in the issue of expanding the European Economic Community to admit Portugal and Spain. How long and far away seem the days when people blamed the French communists for being "nationalistic!"

The same sort of observation applies to the military. The counter-offensive has a very clear aim here, too: the United States is trying to reopen the question of the balance of power so as to achieve military supremacy. The Americans have considerably increased their war budget. They are strengthening their offshore military bases. They are actively working to heighten tensions rather than responding to appeals for negotiated settlements. They contemplate a so-called "limited nuclear war" in Europe; NATO's decision to deploy the new American missiles, like the decision to produce the neutron bomb, are part of that strategy.

This adventurist policy, though, is encountering increased popular opposition, even in the United States: it will have to reckon with the harsh facts of world opinion: witness the vote in the United States House of Representatives -- the equivalent of our National Assembly -- to place an immediate freeze on nuclear arsenals and to negotiate substantial arms reductions! And there was that statement by the American bishops with the very same thrust, published after prolonged debate, and during which pressures from the American administration and from the Vatican were much in evidence, but failed to produce the anticipated results.

This policy, as we have seen, is increasingly coming under fire in all countries, first among them those where the new missiles are slated for deployment.

I should like to consider another aspect of this counteroffensive: I am thinking about what we have dubbed the "ideological war."

Although when the term was first coined, it evoked some controversy, I think that dissent has been silenced by events. It is not patently evident that what we have here is an ongoing campaign, orchestrated on a global scale, emanating from many centers, and endowed with limitless funding and considerable staff.

After a failed attempt to wrap itself in noble ideals about human rights, this campaign of systematic denigration, of manipulation of opinion, designed to project a loathsome image of socialism in a fearfully perilous world where any people daring to struggle is branded fanatical, or barbarous, or ... manipulated. The idea is indeed, given the obvious difficulty of holding up domination by big capital as an enchanting prospect, to try to cut people off from all hope. The message is driven home hard and relentlessly: this is even more blatant in France, where changes are already under way with the presence of communists in the cabinet. The capitalists have no choice but to mount an all-out offensive against it.

This campaign is escalating in stridency on the theme of the "Soviet threat" which is supposed to hang over us. We must look deeper, we must see what lies behind it. It grows louder, as the fear mounts among the imperialists and the parties that support them, at seeing the pacifist movement swelling around the world. In a way, it is imperialism's frantic effort to dam the expression of the peoples' hunger for peace and disarmament. And that means it can be beaten only if we can build the people's movement, make it still bigger, still mightier than it is.

In concluding this first part, I should say, then, that a careful study of the international state of affairs shows us that the dominant trend is indeed this: as of now, imperialism cannot act as it likes; and the world balance of forces is favorable to the forces of national, social, and human liberation.

We voiced this idea at the 24th congress in the following terms: "The changes that have come about in the world open up new avenues to the struggling peoples, not only to avert war, but to advance toward socialism, following whatever path of their own they may elect to follow."

Clearly, though, in order to stand up against the unremitting efforts of imperialism to recover its lost positions, and to rein in the stirring and ferment of peoples, it is essential for the forces of progress to unite and to act. Should this not happen, and should the balance of world forces not be altered by that action,

we may well experience some reverses. That is what happened last year in Lebanon, as we specifically pointed out.

On that same occasion, we noted that "in order to make a reality of the new opportunities the situation affords, we must intensify the class struggle against the imperialist machinations, in defense and consolidation of world peace, for peaceful coexistence, and for deepening our solidarity with the peoples now struggling for progress and democracy."

The class confrontation at the international level is so bitter that things are not moving in any one linear direction. We see some progress, and we see some setbacks. This cannot hide, however, the direction in which the world is truly tending, and whose salient feature is the forward movement of the forces of progress.

Here we rediscover an idea familiar to us all in connection with the battle in which we are engaged in our own country. It applies with equal cogency at the international level: it is the people who, when all is said and done, make the decision. It would add that, because this is true, we communists and all other revolutionary forces have a special responsibility for what is happening to our own people and to all mankind.

We have seen it clearly in France: it is partly because of the changes that have come to pass in the world that we can envisage, for our own country, a strategy for democratic advances toward a kind of socialism made in France, and made by and for French people.

Socialism As It Stands Now

I just referred to the fact that assessment of the trend among socialist societies is at the center of the current ideological confrontation, particularly in France, which should not surprise us at all, since we all sense that socialism is on our agenda.

As we renewed our affirmation of commitment at the 24th congress, we pledged ourselves to serious efforts to deepen our thinking about these questions and "to make our findings known to the workers." A number of books recently issued by the Messidor publishing group, plus a number of articles appearing in our Party press and publications, bear witness to this effort at enlightenment -- which we must continue.

As part of this exegesis, I should like to underscore here what is as of now, our approach to these issues. It seems to me important to emphasize, in this connection, how intimately it is linked with the strategic and theoretical advances the Communist Party has made in its last three congresses. I perceive it most notably on two issues: the break with the notion of a "Marxist-Leninist" doctrine in favor of a more dialectical concept of scientific socialism, and the break with any notion of a "model" for socialism.

On the first question, I would simply point out that the change we have made embraces the rejection of any hard-and-fast doctrinal system viewing the establishment of socialism in every country as the application of immutable principles and laws, handed down once and for all, to each and every national condition. On the contrary, we reached the conclusion that if the way the world is moving now confirms the universal need for socialism, it is indeed so today in the sense that this need is emerging for every country as a practical requirement, born of the internal ferment and movement in each of them. Given that, there can be no one strategy for the transition to socialism relevant and applicable to all places and in all times: and that brings us back to the proposition that it is up to each people, with its revolutionary avant-garde, to work out its own practical response to the practical needs of its own society.

This idea is familiar to us all; it led us to elaborate our own original strategy, but it also has an immediate impact on our analysis of socialism as it exists today. If we reject any idea of a "model" for ourselves, it follows that there isn't any model for anyone else, either. And so we must rid ourselves of any "centralized" vision of the revolutionary forces: and it follows, in our view, that we must scrap the term "international communist movement," which harks back to the structured movement of the "center," and of joint elaboration of strategy -- concepts which will no longer fit with the way things really are in our time.

If this is so, then we must examine every socialist country -- eschewing any hard-and-fast ratings list -- as an actual, concrete, historical form taken in the transition to socialism in each individual society.

Extreme Diversity

The pertinence of these theoretical advances is further heightened by careful analysis of the socialist societies. Diversity in their developmental stages, their traditions, their thought patterns, the social makeup of their people, their size, their natural conditions, their environment, Diversity again, in the forms taken as they initiate the process of building socialism, and in the pace and the patterns that process displays today.

We might observe, for instance, that socialist revolutions do not come about in highly industrialized countries -- with the exception of Czechoslovakia -- but rather in underdeveloped countries which are often very poor, where the heritage of feudalism or capitalism or colonialism has weighed very heavily at the material level, of course, but also at the level of individual consciousness.

It is because this enormous diversity is destined to increase still further that it is time we not only stopped trying to construct a weighted list of the countries that are building socialism; we must also eschew any "grading" of countries as "socialist" or as having a "socialist orientation," or again as following a "non-capitalist path," and so on. We prefer to observe each body of things as they are, without labeling countries that are experiencing very difficult situations and are involved in a process which will, on the face of it, be a very lengthy one.

With that observation about diversity out of the way, what can we say about these societies?

First, if we really want to allow for the starting-point of each experiment, for the historical conditions, for the international environment, and for the unique qualities of every nation, we find: all these societies have already responded to a number of aspirations which are still targets for worker struggles in a great many countries.

In the teeth of obstacles of all kinds -- and, be it added, despite wars thrust upon them by imperialism in the Soviet Union, in China, in Korea, and in Vietnam -- the socialist countries have achieved very creditable advances in a very short time, in view of the immensity, the strange newness, and the conditions surrounding the human adventure on which they have embarked.

Let's look at a few examples: The Cuban people have shaken off the foreign yoke, they have conquered illiteracy, they no longer suffer famine. And yet this socialist and still-underdeveloped country is deprived of the resources it had every right to expect from its sugar production, because of the prices set by the multinationals; in addition, it is still subject to the American blockade.

More than a billion Chinese are building a socialist society in which everybody eats as much as he wants, gets an education, is no longer subject to exploitation -- and that's in a socialist country which is also a developing country.

Need I cite the startling gap between the full employment achieved in the GDR and the 2.5 million unemployed in the neighboring FRG?

What do we know, here in France, of the industrial and agricultural breakthroughs in these countries, about their technological and scientific progress (think about the French cosmonaut and his space flight in cooperation with the USSR)? What do we know about the social and cultural achievements of these countries, about their newly devised patterns of mass participation which have sprung up and taken root amid such a profusion of disparate conditions?

The idea is not to try to convince anybody that the ideal would be to live like a Vietnamese peasant, a Soviet research worker, or a

Yugoslav laborer, Yet, we cannot very well allow the exploiters to persuade the public that it would have been better for these people if they had never chosen to build a new society!

Let's get this straight. We spoke out -- too late, true -- against the grave consequences of the concepts and practices of Stalinism and we have learned the lessons implicit in them for ourselves. Those practices and concepts, we said, were alien to the very vocation of socialism. And there, in fact, you have what is certainly the essential difference between socialism and capitalism. Capitalism, rooted in exploitation of the toil of the many for the profit of the few, cannot allow the workers to take their destinies into their own hands. Socialism, on the contrary, has meaning only if it sets diligently about solving, as quickly as possible, year by year, the daily problems of the workers, of the people; if it brings them, as quickly as possible, and in steadily increasing amounts, practical improvements in the way of justice, well-being, progress, participation, and democracy. This is the sense in which we speak of the universal requirement for democracy to which socialism is the answer. We are not talking here about the administrative measures adopted in this country or that as surrogates for the requisite political and ideological struggle -- measures of which we loudly voice our disapproval. More basically, though, we are looking at the rising aspiration toward more intensive democratization of all of social life, toward decentralization of responsibilities, toward a release of initiative at every level of society.

Current Developments

Where do we stand, from this point of view? First, we must remember that those societies do not exist in a world apart. The crisis in the capitalist system has its impact on them, too, particularly through the international exchange channels. And also through the arms race, thrust upon them by the imperialists: how could we also fail to see how sorely they need the great sums they pour into ensuring their security, for aid to the peoples fighting for national liberation, for the newly independent countries -- in a word, for internationalist solidarity?

Even as we bear all these constraints -- and they are major ones -- in mind, we may say that the socialist societies today are encountering problems they have never experienced before, contradictions born of the development of the very social system they are building, and of the new needs of their people which derive from those contradictions.

Here again, the questions that arise are not identical everywhere, since each society has its own peculiarities, its own pace of development, its own unique qualities. However, there is an overall trend, and a growing one, toward casting about in search of the reforms, the approaches, the means suitable and appropriate as responses to these issues. We noted this a year ago, at the 24th congress. We have a number of still more cogent examples of it today.

This is true at the economic level. In a context of recession among the capitalist countries, those that are building a socialist society continue to make headway. Their retreat to the international crisis in capitalism is to turn their backs on austerity: in 1982, the standard of living was still rising -- albeit slowed a little -- thanks to the priority assigned to consumption, to the importance of social gains, and to the absence of unemployment.

Just a while back I cited the example of industrial production. One might add to that fact, reported at the last CC meeting, that the Eastern European countries have reduced their indebtedness to western banks and evened out their trade with the West. There you have one of the tangible results of the effort put forth by these countries to find solutions to the problems they face.

We can go still further in our assessment of these current developments.

While through an entire era the need to build an economic and industrial potential took priority -- that was a matter of stark need, and is still matter for concern to some -- the accent now is everywhere laid on the question of satisfying people's needs. In a way, this is the be-all and end-all of socialism, and it is being restored, emphatically, to its place at the center of thinking and consideration.

We also find a new effort which is more than an "orientation," but is translated into hard facts, so as to take more complete account of social change, of mindsets, of levels of education and training, of levels of awareness, etc.

While the conclusions, including the theoretical ones, are still in a state of gestation, there is a promising accent laid on the persistence of contradictions within socialism, which are no longer being attributed to the conflict between "enemies" and the revolutionaries, and research is under way to find answers that will enable the revolutionaries to accept responsibility for them and to overcome them.

For example: the idea that there can be social differentiations, a social and political pluralism -- in whatever form it may be expressed -- is making strides. This is leading to some new ideas as to the role of the labor unions, the Party, the state, and the social organizations.

This in turn leads to more thinking about the form and content of democracy, about participation by the masses, and about ways to encourage their undertakings.

And all of this is leading to new patterns of work organizations opening up more direct participation "at the bottom" for workers in management.

Reforms are thus enacted more resolutely in the work-place, and the legal structure is undergoing some rethinking. We might point in this connection to the current debate in Bulgaria over drafting a new labor code; the experiment with "production brigades" in the USSR, the vesting of new powers in the people of Cuba, etc. These are merely a few indications, but all confirm that, without underestimating the difficulties that still remain, there is certainly no ground for asserting that the people who are building socialism are somehow blocked, unable to advance, incapable of solving their own problems in their own way, on their own. You can't help having confidence in their energy, their intelligence, their spirit of responsibility. And it is this clear-eyed observation, "without blinders or prejudice," that impels us to say that you cannot apply the term "crisis" to the socialist countries in describing the new problems with which they are coping.

It goes without saying that any delay in getting involved in these developments, any hesitation over correcting the mistakes of the past, will lead to blockages and tensions throughout all of society. I am thinking here, of course, about Poland.

We communists stand shoulder to shoulder with the peoples who are building a new society. That has nothing to do with unconditionality. We reserve the right, and tend to go on reserving it, to criticize. There may well be some differences of opinion, some divergences -- even basic ones -- between our Party and our brother Parties in power. We say what we have to say, in measured debate, without trying to set up our policy as a model or ourselves as teachers. We have but one single goal: to do everything we can, as a responsible Party, to make a valid contribution to our common battle.

To banish capitalist exploitation, to commit ourselves to the long process of building a new society, altering social relationships so as to build, with their people, a society of justice and social progress, of peace and democracy -- that is what is going on in these countries, in a diversity of increasingly richer and more productive experiments.

We find in this confirmation that socialism most certainly cannot be anything other than the practical response to the practical problems of every country and every people.

That gives us heart for our own fight, relying on -- and enriching -- a scientific socialism no longer perceived as a completed body of universal laws which need only be applied in all places and at all times, but rather as a universal demand for democracy expressed in a particular manner in each individual country.

NOTE: In the third portion of his lecture, which does not appear here, Maxime Gremetz dealt with the French Communist Party's international activities, dwelling next on the international role of France, on the PCF's activity as part of both the struggle and of government, on relations among communist parties, and on the new internationalism.

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CGT PROPOSALS ON UNEMPLOYMENT, CONTRACTS, FOREIGN TRADE

Paris HUMANITE DIMANCHE in French 26 Aug 83 p 3

[Interview with Henri Krasucki, secretary general of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), by Roger Faivre, for HUMANITE DIMANCHE; date and place not specified]

[Text] [Question] Even during the vacation, as I observed in several reports, many families lived through these summer months with a great deal of worry about returning to work, a great fear of total or partial unemployment, and serious anxieties about their purse. Does the CGT also see the return picture as black?

[Answer] It is a fact that the workers are approaching this return to work with reasons for anxiety connected with the employment situation, with many threats of firms closing, of dismissals announced, and at the same time, reasons for dissatisfaction connected with the various inroads being made on family budgets.

We in the CGT are their spokesmen. We defend their interests. Therefore, we have the same anxieties, with a concern for responding to these positively, achieving progress, finding solutions and organizing wage earners' actions to this end.

[Question] Thus you do not think that the crisis makes these difficulties obligatory and inevitable?

[Answer] There is no inevitability, contrary to what is claimed by those advocating negative solutions for the next budget or those nurturing expectation of a catastrophe with regard to employment. Moreover, among the latter, who preach resignation, some act only to increase the workers' difficulties, make them pay more and worsen unemployment. This is evident in the CNPF [National Council of French Employers] and on the right. And we find, in certain supposedly leftist circles, people who go along with this.

Well, we are saying the events may take an entirely different turn. The CGT is putting forward elements of a solution....

[Question] For example?

[Answer] The key question is that of the means needed to finance industrial policy and create jobs. The workers will believe in the will to do something new only if they observe concretely that we are taking a significant step in the direction of greater social justice. There are resources in the country, confirmed by all studies on the state of the major fortunes. The workers should make sure that it is not always the same ones who pay.

[Question] As for the CNPF, however, it never stops complaining about the burdens of business, the difficulties, the lack of competitiveness with regard to foreign countries.

[Answer] As for Mr Gattaz, he doesn't change. But he has just been refuted once again by indications from the INSEE [National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies] and the EEC, whose studies confirm that wage costs are sharply lower in France than they are in all the major European countries.

Mr Gattaz's obsession is with lay-offs. That is to go backward with regard to wage earners' rights, while economic efficiency calls for going forward. There is nothing exorbitant in the protection system achieved by the workers.

There exists today some regulation of dismissals, a 1-to-3 month delay, just the time needed to discuss, to look for a solution. Previously, there was total arbitrariness. The CNPF would like to go back to that.

For us, the problem is precisely that there are many dismissals, factory closings, and it is advisable to make better use of this delay, as well as all the workers' rights, in order to seek constructive solutions, well suited to each situation, solutions that make it possible to provide employment, better supply the national market and maintain the growth of the economy.

[Question] And also to be an exporting country?

[Answer] We must succeed, at the same time, in better utilizing and developing the national market and in putting France in a better position on international markets. That is not possible with zero or weak growth. Zero growth means a sure increase in unemployment. There is no growth if there is no purchasing power enabling the workers as a whole to consume, to buy on the national market.

That is the basis of our criticism of the measures making inroads on purchasing power that have been carried out in the name of stringency.

[Question] Therefore, the CGT is not totally satisfied with the latest indications: the price increases limited to 0.19 percent in July, 0.3 percent fewer unemployed than in July 1982, the foreign trade deficit reduced to 3 billion in July?

[Answer] I am not going to complain about indications that are more positive than in the past. What is involved is not the government's overall action for the past 2 years. This indeed includes positive aspects, to which we have contributed and which we are stressing. But in many fields, these results are

still shaky. And even more, if corrections are not made in time, there is a risk of worsening the situation.

We are not alone in considering that social measures to reduce unemployment, however important they are, are insufficient. Economic and industrial measures are needed.

We must tackle the problems of industrial development and employment with a new vision, utilizing all the country's potentialities, all the new technological possibilities....

[Question] Precisely what do you think of this idea that the modernization of production inevitably leads to the elimination of jobs?

[Answer] Technical progress should make it possible to improve production and lighten men's effort, to lead to increased qualification and new products, the products of industrial activities, all at once.

Whether it be robots or other modern machines, they must also be manufactured. And it is not true that only the Japanese or the Americans are capable of this. The industrial enterprises of the public sector have a large role to play in this.

[Question] Are they really pilot enterprises? Will they not continue in some cases to neglect the recapture of the domestic market, preferring to produce abroad?

[Answer] It would be a foolish debate to seek to know whether they should or should not have establishments abroad. Today's large enterprises need to have establishments in different regions of the world. But the main base should be located in France. That is what gives them their strength. That is what should enable them to meet the country's needs. What is not acceptable is for them to reimport products manufactured abroad, in order to meet these needs, when we can manufacture them at home. On questions such as these, the workers should have their say. All big files should be discussed, all proposals examined and compared in order that effective solutions, best meeting national needs, may be chosen.

[Question] That, for example, is what the Peugeot-Talbot or Chapelle-Darblay wage earners are asking....

[Answer] Exactly. And they are not the only ones. In fact, their action perfectly illustrates what I was saying about the possibilities of modifying the turn that the fatalists would like to impose on events. The Peugeot-Talbot management wanted to dismiss nearly 8,000 workers. The workers' immediate action, on the CGT's initiative, the positions of our metallurgical federation greatly contributed to the decision just taken by the government to appoint an expert. Nothing is assured as yet; the workers must continue to speak up and to act, but there is commitment to a process that may lead to a different outcome. With Chapelle-Darblay, we are faced with the paper problem. What is involved is the second item in the foreign deficit, after petroleum, whereas we are a country of forests and a great paper-making tradition.

It is true that the cause of this situation lies in the policy of neglect maintained for many years by the employers concerned and by the governments of the right. Today, considerable investments are needed to offset the delays.

The ministry decided on the solution that seemed to it the only practicable one. But the workers are of another opinion. They consider that something better can be done. They say so. At the same time, the CGT organization, together with the workers, is putting forward specific, very carefully studied proposals, which are aimed at better meeting the country's needs. Nothing is settled. Good sense would call for our taking these proposals into account.

They are the fruit of the speaking out and research of wage earners together with the paper and book organizations of the CGT. That is, the producers and users of a commodity. It is an illustration of the step needed at the country level to put production and consumption in touch with each other.

[Question] The employment-training-production contracts proposed by the minister of labor, Jack Ralite, also go in this direction?

[Answer] Yes. The government puts forward ideas. The CGT makes proposals, discussed with the workers. There are broad possibilities, revivals of activities that are immediately possible, sometimes without large investments. But we must put order in this national market. We do not know what we may find there or where to find it. It is necessary to take inventory, to give all information to the wage earners, the work's councils, the trade unions, to use to the utmost the wage earners' rights of expression, to encourage their initiatives, to bring out their proposals.

To know what is being produced, what can be produced in France itself, to better exploit the national market, such is the step we can take to develop industrial activities and create jobs. There is a need for clear and concrete ideas for the future and also for the moment.

[Question] Trade union action today is strongly marked by this aspect of proposal and dialog.

[Answer] I mentioned the serious anxieties of the workers and their determination to contribute with their CGT organizations to the search for the best solutions in each situation. But this step comes up against the determination of capital, the CNPF and the right to make use of all economic means for political ends.

The wage earners' positive intervention thus goes by way of trade union action, the effort of all CGT organizations to work out proposals with all the workers, to discuss these with them, and mass action.

Nothing can be resolved by discussion alone. The main thing for the CGT is for the workers to make their voices heard and to play an active role collectively. And to that end, to seek constructive and effective proposals, to

discuss them, utilizing all the possibilities of expression of the wage earners as a whole, to propose the best suited initiatives for action, therefore the most imaginative possible. The weight of the workers should make itself felt advantageously.

It is this state of mind that animates the CGT, both with regard to employment and the defense of purchasing power as well as other broad questions, particularly that of social welfare and the preparations for the 19 October social security elections.

[Question] That contradicts both those commentators speaking, in this return to work, of a CGT "showing its claws" as well as those imagining it as "drawing in its claws."

[Answer] The CGT defends the workers, looks for solutions and makes proposals with them, acts in order to move things in the right direction, in order to frustrate attempts by employers or others to impose regressive measures. It is this state of mind that makes possible vigorous, differentiated, but always positive actions, like those at Peugeot-Talbot or indeed Chapelle-Darblay, that makes it possible to reject negative agreements signed by other trade union organizations, as with Dassault or at the SNIAS [National Industrial Aerospace Company]. With "claws" neither "shown" nor "withdrawn": always a concern for efficiency, initiative, democracy, in order to put forward the best proposals, lead the most massive and best suited action possible to bring them to a successful conclusion. In brief, to be the trade union of the workers.

9434

CSO: 3519/621

COT ON PSF PRE-CONGRESS RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

Paris LE MATIN in French 7 Sep 83 p 5

[Interview with Jean-Pierre Cot, former minister of cooperation, by Dominique Burs; date and place not specified]

[Excerpts] Jean-Pierre Cot: Beware of the many military involvements.

The Ricardian leader analyzes France's domestic and international policy in LE MATIN.

With an eye to the October Congress, officials of the PS' trend A (Mitterrandists) and the Rocardians continue their discussion this week on the study of a possible political agreement before Saturday's leadership committee. Jean-Pierre Cot, former minister of Cooperation and a friend of Michel Rocard, is currently on a part-time assignment to UNESCO as executive advisor. LE MATIN publishes his thoughts on the many worldwide military involvements.

[Question] The resumption of political activities among the socialists is characterized by Lionel Jospin's invitation to realism and Jean-Pierre Chevènement's defense of another policy. How do you react to these two speeches?

[Answer] I have always thought that facts had to be faced squarely and "the truth spoken," as Michel Rocard would say. There is no alternative policy to that of Jacques Delors, if not in all his methods, at least in principle. I do not believe in the one advocated by Jean-Pierre Chevènement. It is not true that one year of protectionism would create the conditions for an economic recovery. There is confusion in delays. The reorganization of the industrial sector is done over a middle or long term. As it stands, the temporary protective measures which he is suggesting can only be adopted for a few months or maybe a year. Furthermore, our country is forced to import more than it exports, if only to ensure our supplies of energy and raw materials. Any restrictions on imports would lead to retaliatory measures much more serious than the benefits we would acquire. There is no easy solution. Let us not mince words, we must make an effort and endure hardships and austerity.

[Question] With the risk that the public would reject the Left...

[Answer] The public is ready to accept this effort providing it is spread out and prospects are defined. To spread it out means to begin discussing methods for financing the budget deficits of the Social Security and also the division of labor. Some people currently continue to monopolize a labor cost which is coming down while unemployment is going up. We are forced to be bolder in the matter of the division of labor. As for prospects, we need more stamina and imagination. We had the merit of implementing most of Candidate François Mitterrand's 101 proposals. We are not, however, going to spend 5 years managing the decisions taken during the first year. It is our duty to propose another design to the French people, the more so as new and dangerous issues have surfaced, especially social welfare which is one of our major challenges.

[Question] Should we look for solutions in the taxation of social contributions or should we do something about health care expenditure?

[Answer] We must look everywhere. A certain amount of taxation is necessary. It is not enough to change the revenue system, however, if the problem of expenditures is not also tackled; if the very concept of the health system is not challenged; and if we do not insist on each individual being responsible for his own body and his own affairs. This is very drastic, but I doubt that we will get by without a real serious reform and without tearing down the system and rebuilding it on different principles. We will be forced to do so, for we, the Left, will be unable to continue to be the administrators of the system's erosion. It would be a philosophical repudiation and a political catastrophe.

[Question] Do you believe as Alain Richard does that we must take advantage of the austerity to initiate more radical changes?

[Answer] Alain Richard is right in one thing: We cannot say that we are going through a deep organizational crisis and address the problem by saying that the hardships are only temporary before starting again as before. To take this as an excuse, however, to justify the austerity! That is a little too much, for it is not particularly pleasant. I must add that he is willing a little too rapidly to accept an unequal distribution of efforts. My main criticism of Alain Richard, however, arises from his course of action in the preparation of the Congress. To want to submit a motion without first establishing that an agreement is possible is questionable.

[Question] Conversely, you seem to want an agreement at any cost.

[Answer] We would like an agreement with Lionel Jospin and Pierre Mauroy, for we do not see an important disagreement on basic principles. As it stands, it is basic political principles which must dictate the behavior of each and everyone and not the problems of political machines or power. This agreement must, however, be verified politically and the positions of trend A clarified. They still show some ambiguity, which is, moreover, normal in a trend extending from Christian Goux to Jacques Delors. We, as well as Lionel Jospin, are responsible for this verification, for this decision could lead to our weighing the advantages and disadvantages of a debate which could shift from a general discussion to exposing, should there be a disagreement, the contradictions inherent with the PS' majority.

[Question] What do you think of France's involvement in Chad?

[Answer] It would not be fair on my part to comment on France's African policy. I will deal with this question on more general terms. France is a world power with a historical mission to fulfill. Its foreign policy is ambitious and coherent and, as a socialist, I am proud of it. The problem is in the extent of its involvement, however, for it has limited means. Can France extend its involvement infinitely without running the risk, at some time or other, of being unable to keep its promises and without suffering financial and political consequences? This is a question we should all ask as citizens.

6857

CSO: 3519/625

MITTERRAND'S AFRICAN POLICY SEEN AIDING SOVIET GOALS

Paris LE FIGARO MAGAZINE in French 3 Sep 83 pp 78-81

[Article by Robert Lacontre: "The African War Is Beginning in Chad"]

[Text] The third Chadian war began badly (the first, 1968-1971, cost us the lives of 50 soldiers; the second, 1978-1980, 20). The Libyan invader had taken a third of the country before the French "protector" even reacted. But this time, the sand war is much more serious. It is the first confrontation between France and the USSR, with the Libyans interposed.

That is why Gromyko is running to Paris. To do what? To make a deal: We must give up our support for Chancellor Kohl so that he will accept the American missiles on German soil. In exchange, Moscow will halt Qadhdhafi's warring ardors. For the communists, the real stake between now and the end of the year is the installation of the Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe. Until then, anything goes. In particular, one should expect an increase in international terrorism aimed at France.

Mitterrand stepped into a nest of vipers in deciding to halt the Islamic legion a little late. Actually, despite opinions to the contrary on the part of the pro-Libyan Quai d'Orsay lobby and big business, it is a secret to no one that Libya is doing the Kremlin's work. As early as 1974, the USSR had stepped up its arms shipments to Qadhdhafi, who now has a fantastic arsenal out of all proportion to the size of his country. It is as if the Soviet Union were stocking that considerable mass of weapons in order to launch the final attack on the center of Africa. The Russians have built gigantic airports with paved runways 8 kilometers long in order to accommodate huge military transports, half-buried bunkers, underground fortifications stuffed with electronic equipment, as it did in Outer Mongolia and Afghanistan. In addition, in the past 10 or 15 years, Qadhdhafi has been the main arms supplier to all the liberation movements and terrorists in the world, from the Irish to the Filipinos, the Basques to the Salvadorans, the Corsicans to the Palestinians. Coincidentally, most of these tiny groups are Marxistic.

That is undoubtedly the reason why, in the long interview granted by the president of the republic to our evening colleague, one will note a total absence of the slightest allusion to the role of the Soviet Union in that region of the world. The specialists from the leftist daily did not even ask a single question on the topic, unless they were censored....

Simple Reality

It is therefore not worth the trouble to rack one's brain to try to discern how much spontaneity and sincerity there is in Qadhdhafi's quest for Islamic fundamentalism, his "third path," his cultural revolution and his "Little Green Book." Reality is much simpler: Libya is a vast, empty country. Qadhdhafi would be absolutely nothing without the protection of the USSR. He would be absolutely nothing if he were not a troublemaker, if he did not have oil to burn, even if, in the opinion of experts, reserves will be exhausted in 30 or 40 years and if, after the series of oil crises, Westerners have limited waste and diversified suppliers. The 24 million petrodollars a year he could count on at the time of the great black gold boom have dropped to 7 million. The economic recession has now hit the country hard, a country with 3 million inhabitants, including 800,000 French upper-level personnel -- half of the active population -- a million wandering nomads, 95 percent desert and 1 percent arable land. Discontent is growing in all strata of the new Libyan society, especially among the military and students. Qadhdhafi therefore needs a few outside successes.

This is the reason why the Russian strategists accept all the whims of the "colonel" and, if need be, even provoke them. Communism has all the time in the world. The post-Qadhdhafi period is already planned. If it has to, the Kremlin can move it up. As in Afghanistan, with Daoud, Taraki and Amin, it would need only 10 KGB agents to strike Qadhdhafiism from history.

The leader of the Jamahiriya (state of the masses) dreamed of a great Islam stretching from Mauritania to the Sudan by gathering in all the black Islamized populations. This is why he repeatedly moved south, occupied and razed Ndjamen, before being forced to withdraw. He is now trying a new penetration. The Russians brilliantly brought off their maneuver. Their Libyan proteges are supporting the band of looters of Goukouni Oueddei, 3,000 men, and occupy one-third of the Chadian territory. The Westerners are caught in the trap because they are already speaking of a line of demarcation along the 14th parallel. History repeats itself. If there are negotiations, the French and Africans will accept the fait accompli: partition. Moscow will thus have a new bridgehead for making its next leap. Mitterrand may well say "No" to annexation when it has been a fact for 13 years in the case of the Aozou strip which was contiguous with the old border and which no one worried about. Can France get the northern invader out of Chad? But he also says "No" to the reconquest. That is a total contradiction. By dint of trying to tranquillize everyone, his antimilitaristic voters and the completely disunited Africans, our country could well lose its credibility. The result is that the Chadian problems of our president and the French-American tension that followed, despite the visit by General Walters, former head of the CIA, to Latche, did not prevent the bad humor of Reagan, who withdrew his two AWACS from the Sudan and left the French expeditionary corps completely blind in a modern war. One can speak of half-victories for Moscow.

Paris is stepping up its diplomatic contacts. Mitterrand's friend, attorney Dumas, met with Qadhdhafi, surrounded by his female bodyguards. Guy Penne, "the little imbecile," to quote Hissein Habre, crisscrossed Africa and Maurice Faure visited Mengitsu, the bloody tyrant of Ethiopia, Moscow's man and

Qadhdhafi's friend, whom the Africans, also responsible for the chaos, shamelessly and fearlessly elected acting president of the OAU, the organization of African disunity, one might call it. Moreover, it does not have a cent in its coffers, unless it is to pay the fabulous emoluments of its useless diplomats. As for the United Nations, it is totally absent, since its secretary general has only two obsessions: the independence of Namibia (even if it must become a Soviet colony) and the Palestinian cause. He therefore visited Windhoek during the napalm bombing of Faya-Largeau and is now in Geneva for the conference on Palestine.

But what if Qadhdhafi should attack? Despite his small army of 30,000 scraggly soldiers and his foreign legion, the Islamic Legion of 10,000 poor devils who enlist for a few handfuls of dollars -- I have seen them line up before the Libyan embassies in the Arab countries -- he nevertheless does have 3,000 tanks, 2,000 armored vehicles, 2,000 cannons, 3,000 antitank missiles and 500 fighter planes. France has sold him 150 Mirage jets, 200 AMX's, 300 "Crotales" batteries, 10 fast patrol boats -- the very ones that went to Israel despite De Gaulle's ban -- 4 "Daphne" submarines made in Spain, and hundreds of rubber rafts for his commandos. As soon as he took power in 1981, Mitterrand lifted D'Estaing's embargo. On the eve of a major air battle of Mirages pitted against Mirages, he must be biting his nails. Of course, a large part of this war machine has been rendered inoperable by the sandy desert wind, the *ghikili*, but 2,000 Soviet experts and 4,000 advisers from the Eastern Bloc countries, including 1,000 East Germans, 800 Cubans and North Koreans, are tackling the job of "reactivating" them. In addition to 2,000 American oil tankers, there are even a few Yankee mercenaries, a dozen French (1,500 residents) and 200 specialists from the West German firm OTRAG, which makes heavy launchers and satellites. This company was set in in Tanganyika several years ago and had territory as vast as several French departments combined. It is said that it engaged in atom bomb research. One should add that hundreds of Libyans are continuing their studies in the United States and Great Britain, that several dozen specialists in electronics are working in Swedish laboratories and that dozens of pilots have been trained in France, the United States and Russia. With Moscow's aid, Qadhdhafi has two small nuclear power plants and orders large quantities of uranium from his Nigerien neighbor. Qadhdhafi even tried to buy an atomic bomb from the Chinese, but Chou En-lai refused: "Do as we did," he told them. "Build your own."

Two columns of armored vehicles with 200 tanks and 3,000 soldiers each are moving in the east and the west toward the first French outposts, but without haste. If they were to make more progress, our "Super-Etendards" would have to intervene. In all, eight planes of this type could be mobilized, along with a dozen more that could come from Djibouti and the Central African Republic, in addition to four Mirages. For his part, Qadhdhafi has sent 40 "Super Jets" to the Aozou Strip. Soviet engineers are rehabilitating the Faya-Largeau airport. Despite the crowing in the French press, nothing proves that the POLISARIO general would have control of the air. Consequently, there could be heavy losses on both sides. But does anyone now remember what Mitterrand said at the time of the surprise Kolwezi operation? Does anyone recall that the Socialist Government wanted to send the contingent to Indochina just before Dien Bien Phu? Does anyone remember that our president was minister of interior during the Algerian repression?

War Drums

It has also been forgotten that for a time, Hissein Habre was our worst enemy, that for months he kept Francoise Claustre with him in Tibesti, that he knew her well when he was a student in France, that during her detention, her husband, a minor SDECE [Foreign Intelligence and Counterintelligence Service] agent, engaged in weapons trafficking. The ransom of the leftist ethnologist cost us a billion francs. Our current protege, Hissein Habre, is costing us much more, when one realizes that in order to play at Napoleon and maintain his army, Qadhdhafi spends a billion dollars a month.

In short, with the entire Ndjamenan gotha in ruins, the VIP's from the two hotels that remained standing not far from the brand new mosque built by Saudi Arabia, the plethora of high officials in the Chadian Government (what government?), and the Zairian higher officers who mainly frequent the only nightclub in town, have witnessed a war drum party with trumpets, elephants and topless dancers. A jet black minister conscientiously read several poems addressed to our president, President Mobutu, who was recently in Chad, and the American President. It would appear that the latter received the best treatment: "O Reagan, son of Lincoln and of the Negro slaves who trampled the hydra of racism and slavery...." Hissein Habre finally understood that he had to accommodate his allies. The minister, somewhat out of breath, suddenly approached our ambassador, who jumped, and presented him with gifts for our president, not diamonds, but a fine scales, a boa skin, two elephant tusks and a rug of fine wool.

At the same time, Pierre Mauroy, who is following a reducing diet, had a map of Chad placed on his desk to help him to understand. Hernu got all worked up upon an inspection of how scattered out means were in the vastness of the territory. He immediately ordered that 10 tanks be sent as reinforcements. "We should have hit them hard and fast before Faya-Largeau was taken," one general who wishes to remain anonymous told me. Our elite troops now have to dig in the sand in scorching heat and scrutinize the Tatar desert where the enemy might be deployed. The situation could go on forever.

11,464

CSO: 3519/624

BRIEFS

MASSIVE ELECTION REFORMS RUMORED--That is the rumor circulating in opposition circles. Pierre Mehaignerie, president of the CDS [Social Democratic Center Party], passed it on to Forcalquier last week and Michel Poniatowski told it to Bendor: The government is reported to be drafting a major election reform to be presented to Parliament in a single bloc -- that is, involving all future elections (European, regional and legislative elections), in December, for example. The government would then have an election arsenal to draw upon at will at the right time. Poniatowski, who as former minister of interior would have inside information, described what could be the future voting modes, adding that the government has already worked out numerous types of voting for coming elections. Naturally, it will choose the one most favorable to its well-understood interests. The prime objective of the government would be to mask the socialist and communist election defeat. Poniatowski believes that the legislative voting would be profoundly changed with the elimination of many districts and the establishment of about 100 seats to be elected by proportional voting. [By B. B.] [Text] [Paris QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS in French 9 Sep 83 p 9] 11,464

CSO: 3519/624

BRIEFS

PRESS BILL ADOPTED--Ankara, 29 Sep (AA)--The Consultative Assembly floor adopted Thursday the press bill which eliminates the special press courts and introduces the new practice of trying journalists in certain cases at criminal courts. Under the new arrangement, permission to publish a newspaper in Turkey will be granted by the Interior Ministry officials who will consider, before making their decisions, the advice of the local administrators involved and the Foreign Ministry. Those sentenced to jail terms over 5 years, those convicted of theft, bribery, smuggling, counterfeiting, embezzlement, swindling, or "crimes against the state security" will not be permitted to become newspaper editors. Newspapers will be banned from publishing the indictments, documents, and decisions of all kinds pertaining to legal cases before these are actually read at the court sessions. Editors will be liable to be given jail sentences for items published in their newspapers or magazines but these sentences will be converted into fines. [Text] [TA291539 Ankara ANATOLIA in English 1520 GMT 29 Sep 83]

CSO: 3500/1

CIVILIAN, MILITARY EXPERTS PREPARE CIVIL DEFENSE REPORT

Madrid ABC in Spanish 1 Sep 83 p 17

[Text] EFE--A group of civilian and military experts, at the request of the Advanced Studies National Defense Center, has drawn up a report in which, after highlighting the inadequate legislation on civil defense in Spain, it asks that the state administration be granted supervisory capacity to set standards for civil defense so that any possible conflict in jurisdiction with the autonomous communities may be avoided. In this connection, the document brings out the need for coordination that exists in the context of the state of the autonomies regarding nonmilitary civil defense.

The committee of experts considers likewise that it is desirable to adopt a provision similar to NATO's in the field of civil defense to fill "the constitutional void that can be seen in Spain in the regulation of emergencies and national defense situations."

The floods in northern Spain have shown the excellent preparedness of government agencies, both central and autonomous, to meet emergency situations, but they lack an adequate legal base identifying events.

The report of the experts at the Advanced Studies National Defense Center indicates the "global" nature of modern conflicts and catastrophes and the missions which, as in NATO, it would have to fulfill in such cases: The survival of the government, both central and local; the promulgation of legislation for emergency situations; regulation and promotion of the economy; the use of transportation facilities; energy supplies; raw materials; industrial and agricultural production; the equitable distribution of food and resources essential for life; the assignment of manpower; protection of the population; the establishment of antiatomic and antibacteriological shelters; public order; public health; medical and hospital services; and communications.

The document, drafted by the civil defense seminar group of the Strategic Studies Institute, is entitled "Civil Defense in Spain and NATO: Questions Which Are Raised Before Spain's Possible Membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization."

Independently of whether Spain joins NATO or not, the experts hold that greater civil-military coordination is necessary at the central and territorial level, with the determination of their respective missions and cooperation channels.

The text notes that "special legislative treatment must be given to territorial coordination in the context of the 'state of the autonomies' in the nonmilitary civil defense (for example, in the case of floods). The committee of experts warns that one of the fields in which there is a lag is in the coordination and mobilization of resources for defense: How and where to obtain energy, oil, manpower, health care, food, and so on. The experts criticize the lack of constitutional provisions and organic laws regarding the basic and primordial principle that the Spanish armed forces and the Spanish Government itself should 'insure' as far as possible responsibility for the survival of the nation and of its inhabitants and subsequently its independence, sovereignty, unity, and integrity."

The committee recalls that Spain has always been a country of "resistance," a fact which implies decentralization of the defense zones with various arrangements until it reaches the district level.

Regarding domestic policy it is advisable, according to the experts, that the Ministry of Interior assume civil defense tasks.

National Council of Civil Defense

For the organization of civil defense the experts recommend placing the executive organ of civil defense among those agencies directly appointed to be responsible to the prime minister or members of the so-called Ministry of the Presidency.

For that purpose, they recommend a National Council of Civil Defense with deliberative and decision-making powers in its sphere of jurisdiction and, in general, the authority to advise and propose measures to the other organs responsible for civil defense.

The National Council of Civil Defense would fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of the government executive and its prime minister, who could chair it in such a case or, when the prime minister is absent, it could be chaired by the deputy prime minister if there is one or by the ministers of defense or interior, involving in its functions the other ministries and organs charged with various areas of civil defense and in general all the public agencies and other organizations connected with matters falling under its jurisdiction.

2662

CSO: 3548/496

PCE CHARGES DENIAL OF POPULAR WILL TO QUIT NATO

Madrid MUNDO OBRERO in Spanish 26 Aug-1 Sep 83 pp 17-19

[Article by Manuel Torres]

[Text] It was in the warmth of 20 August 1981 when, in the solitude of Moncloa Palace and in the weakest moment of his government, Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo decided to put Spain into NATO. Barely 6 months had passed since that "domestic Spanish issue"--in the words of Gen Alexander Haig--which occurred on 23 February 1981 and barely a month since the followers of the UCD [Democratic Center Union] and the PSOE [Spanish Socialist Workers Party] had reached an agreement to neutralize the autonomous regions.

From the earliest moments the parties of the Left announced their opposition. Jaime Ballesteros, deputy from the PCE [Spanish Communist Party], analyzed that decision by the government in the following terms: "It seems beyond doubt to me that there has been pressure by the Reagan administration for Spain to join NATO. Furthermore, this coincides with the catastrophic international policy being pursued by Calvo-Sotelo and Perez Llorca, constantly more dependent on the United States, and specifically the most reactionary sector of the U.S. foreign policy establishment."

On his part Luis Yanez, Socialist deputy in charge of the PSOE's foreign policy in Congress, criticized the government's decision and proposed some lines of action for his part in the future. And, among other things, he said: "What we can indeed affirm because it has been a position announced by our secretary general and therefore supported by the entire party is that if it [membership in NATO] occurs as a result of a barely democratic procedure such as that of a simple majority vote, well then in the future we--the Socialist Party alone or together with the other parties of the Left--if we obtain a majority vote in parliament, are entitled to pursue the alternative of quitting the Atlantic Alliance also by the same majority by which we entered it and to reinstitute a debate in depth, naturally with a referendum, or if there have already been elections, as can be the case, with the legitimacy provided by a majority of the population so that Spain may remain an independent country and not one bound to the interests of the major powers."

Anti-NATO Mobilizations

Mobilizations against Spain's entry into the Atlantic Alliance began a year ago come September when the PCE and the PSOE noisily announced their opposition. In a round of press conferences, Felipe Gonzalez presented the central "slogan" that was to epitomize the Socialist opposition: "NATO: No entry." The communists have made of this issue the central theme of their celebrations which Treball holds annually in Barcelona and the PCE in Madrid. Demonstrations are increasing everywhere as are strikes and rallies in defense of peace.

Spaniards are wondering who are those enemies who are threatening us and who mandate our joining NATO, so hurriedly to boot. Additionally, they believe that this decision by [former] Prime Minister Calvo-Sotelo may be one more factor in the increase in tension and they are surprised at the declarations of the minister of defense, Alberto Oliart, that it is not possible to hold a referendum on the issue because the Spanish people are hardly knowledgeable while the government is exerting pressure so that the parliamentary debate which is getting closer should be the briefest, the most obscure, and the fuzziest possible. And they are outraged in the face of the declarations of Javier Ruperez when he noted that Spain's entry into NATO "must enjoy a certain [emphasis on "certain"] amount of popular support."

Initial Slipshod Job

With 180 votes for, 126 against, and 2 abstentions, on 15 September 1981 the government managed to have its application to join NATO considered favorably and to have the issue begin to be studied by the foreign affairs committee. And one could witness in astonishment the spectacle of a Miguel Herrero and Rodriguez de Minon accusing the Left of not wishing to have a genuine debate on the issue.

While the government was digging itself in in parliament, the police took to the streets to do the dirty work, calmly violating the Constitution. In Asturias, the then civilian governor gave orders to the police to remove from the streets any propaganda opposing Spain's entry into NATO. In Madrid, 10 PCE activists were arrested as they were collecting signatures against Spain's joining NATO. But none of this was of any use and the UCD continued to perpetrate its particular form of felony. In the first few days of October the foreign affairs committee found its specific manner of understanding the parliamentary democracy evidenced by the government party. As soon as the session got under way, Jaime Ballesteros, in the name of the communist parliamentary group, registered a protest against the fact that the committee chairman, Ignacio Camunas, prohibited comments by the parties on the speech that the minister of foreign affairs, Jose Pedro Perez Llorca, was to deliver. Gregorio Peces-Barba and Felipe Gonzalez himself, who recalled the request of Herrero de Minon, spokesman of the UCD, spoke in similar vein, favoring a discussion in depth on the issue, which was now being impeded by the chairman of the foreign affairs committee.

We shall not reiterate details of that discussion which are too well known. But we can indeed remember that question formulated by Jaime Ballesteros regarding the urgency of Spain's entry, the communist delegate recalling how barely a year earlier the UCD was asserting that to join NATO, to arrange for Spain's entry into NATO, three essential conditions had to be met: The issue had to enjoy broad support among the different political forces; the return of Gibraltar to Spain; and Spain's entry into the EEC. Two years after that, Spain is moving toward NATO but no one bothers to explain either the haste or the reasons.

Maintenance of the Status Quo

While the country was witnessing the mouthings of Minister Perez Llorca in parliament, despite the importance of the situation which they themselves had provoked, the PCE was delivering the 500,000 signatures which the communists had collected, with the PSOE doing likewise a few days later. Over a million signatures thus evidenced the people's desire for a referendum which was underwritten by a poll published in the daily EL PAIS according to which 69 percent of Spaniards responded affirmatively on the need for a referendum while 52 percent expressed themselves against Spain's entry into NATO. In Madrid, 150,000 persons, summoned by the communists, demonstrated, and throughout Spain the protest and mobilization increased and continued.

Cold War in Parliament

The adage has it that no one is deafier than he who does not wish to hear. Calvo-Sotelo did not wish to hear the clamor of the Spanish people and continued to press forward with his plans. In 19 hours, with a suspiciously quiet Spanish Television Network, the UCD managed to find sufficient votes to take steps to fill the definitive [policy] vacuum and was subsequently to pay unremittingly for the loss of credibility, the scorn of the citizenry, which its arguments generated.

It was a long and extensive debate, one where the Rights broadly supported the stance of the government, even a Jose Maria de Areilza who, without the slightest intention, unwittingly offered new arguments for Spain not to join NATO.

Probably, an important part of the motivations which underlay the UCD could be found in the words of Miguel Herrero and Rodriguez de Minon, today a faithful acolyte of Manuel Fraga. The scholarly deputy came to say that NATO was incompatible with socialism without indicating that joining it would mean forcing the will of a majority of Spaniards in the most antidemocratic fashion possible. But 2 years later, after experiencing the first 9 months of the PSOE administration, it is possible that his words contained much truth.

The Socialists defended in parliament's plenary session their proposal that the Constitutional Court should first give its opinion. Jordi Sole Tura spoke in support of the Socialist position and summed up his party's posture as follows: "We oppose (Spain's entry into NATO) because we espouse a global stance and it seems to us that the latter is in the interest of Spain as a country; but

contrariwise we understand that the UCD, through its shameful procedure, with its speed and lack of information, using public instrumentalities such as television at the exclusive service of that party, which it is doing in this debate, which is not a debate without genuine publicity, regardless of the people's majority opinion, is to involve our country to a policy of blocs, endorsing interests that are not our country's. This has nothing to do with the interests of the Spanish people who are overwhelmed by other problems."

Socialists and communists both defended the proposed ways to hold a referendum. These were proposals which culminated in the defense made of them by the communist leader Santiago Carrillo and the Socialist leader Felipe Gonzalez. The communist noted: "This is a parliamentary minidebate. This is a scandal. The parliamentarians are going to get us into NATO by a simple majority vote not only without allowing the country to express itself but also by forbidding us deputies to have our way and to publicize our opinion broadly on such a serious decision."

Felipe Gonzalez, with the authority and responsibility of being the secretary general of the major opposition party, said: "When reference is made to a specific type of 'slogans' of any party, we must say that we have waged a campaign on what is known as 'No entry' so that it might be an understandable campaign not only to those who are in our position but also to those who are in doubt and need information. That is, 'demand that they inform you; demand that they listen to you.' And just as we said 'No entry' we are prepared to say 'Exit, yes' so that this issue may be entirely clear."

Everything Is Finished--for Now

When October came to a close and November 1981 began, the votes of the UCD, AP [Popular Alliance], PNV [Basque Nationalist Party], and CiU [Catalonian Convergence and Unity] gave a green light to Spain's joining NATO. And it was precisely mid-November when the University Center held a celebration for peace, a call for neutrality, weeping for it as if for lost innocence.

And there, among the poems of Alberti, the songs of Victor Manuel and Ana Belen, between the tunes of Luis Eduardo Aute and Javier Krahe, the words of Felipe Gonzalez mingled with the notes of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" sung by Miguel Rios, repeating: "We are half a million people here opposing NATO and we wish to be heard because there are many more who stand with us." Two years later Felipe Gonzalez seems to have become deaf.

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